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No Love on the Dole

Mr Healey's hortatory speech on Monday, and the perhaps more seductive dinner for trade union leaders on Tuesday evening, began the annual process of persuading the TUC to lie back and enjoy it. Experience encourages the assumption that the cries of 'Let me go!' and 'I'm not that sort!' will be followed by resignation to a fate far better than death. It may well be so, but submissiveness becomes more reluctant every year.

The social contract has ceased to be an equal exchange now that all the payments owed by the Government, such as the repeal of Tory anti-union laws, have been made. The unions are bidden to refrain from using the power that we hear so much about, and get practically nothing in return. Under the current agreement for 1976-77 they accepted something slightly worse than a wage standstill; wage increases are limited to 5 per cent, but inflation was to be brought down to 10 per cent. However, the Chancellor has been unable to fulfil that breezy promise, and no one can pretend that labour costs are the reason. The chilling pronouncement: 'You will be poorer this year' – characteristically by *The Times* to those earning over £8,500 a year – is what the Labour government and the TUC have to tell the entire working-class. Official figures show that real wages have been falling for months, and they will continue to fall.

Meanwhile, unemployment stands at 1½ million and the only question for 1977 is how much worse it will get. 'Intolerable' and 'unacceptable', the adjectives favoured by Mr Callaghan and Mr Healey, have been devalued to mean simply 'regrettable'. On Monday the Chancellor repeated that the intolerable must be tolerated until inflation is conquered, the very task at which he has been so unsuccessful. To put it baldly, nobody with a hand in official planning is in much of a hurry to get unemployment down. A Government document submitted to Wednesday's meeting of the National Economic Development Council looks to a 30-per-cent rise in gross production over the next four years without any increase in employment in manufacturing industry. Between this grim forecast and the wage-freeze, there is a direct connection. In many families, one member who would normally contribute to the household budget is without work: perhaps the father, perhaps the mother, perhaps one of the unlucky school-leavers. A wage increase for the person who still has a job, sufficient at least to keep pace with inflation, would partially compensate for the missing purchasing power. But there are to be no such wage increases, and no jobs either.

By the logic of capitalist rationalisation, the forecast makes sense. Output will increase because of an improvement in productivity, and sheer hard grind in the less mechanised industrial sectors, without any added employment. Exports will have priority, not consumption. The balance of payments, aided by North Sea oil, will move into surplus. The terms laid down by the International Monetary Fund will be honoured and the loans repaid.

There are only two snags. These are not the priorities, nor even the objectives, of the Labour movement; indeed, the cost of achieving such objectives will be paid by working men and women living at steadily reduced standards, of whom a million and a half will be enduring the misery of unemployment. And for them, the balance of payments surplus will be a source of no personal benefit and a cause neither for rejoicing nor for gratitude. Labour may therefore lose the ensuing election just as it lost the election of 1970, having rescued the established economic system to the advantage of the Tories.

Midway through this Government's term of office, it is high time to ask: what is a Labour government for? A Labour MP, and still more a minister, could put the question to himself still more directly: would you have campaigned, and would you have got the votes, if you had recognised that three years after February 1974 the salient realities would be falling living standards, 1½ million unemployed, and 15 per cent inflation without effective price controls? The honest answer must be: 'I should have said to myself that a Labour government would have failed.'

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Spotlight on Politics

James Fenton

PS . . . PPS

A calm has descended on the economy, and therefore on the political world. For a while – a few weeks, perhaps more – we shall be able to relax a little, have cheery chats about devolution, stop worrying about the pound. Indeed, there's a fashionable new worry – well, more of a nagging suspicion – that the pound may be doing a little *too* well: 'I say! steady on old chap. Don't want to run before we've learned to walk, do we? Don't want to do anything to arouse the suspicions of our allies. Don't want to offend that nice Mr Schmidt, what?' And as the immediate economic crisis has diminished, so has the economic debate. Jim Callaghan is respectfully heard, explaining that he does not know what to do about unemployment. This thing is going to be with us for a long time. He doesn't like it any more than we do, etc. The PM is praised for his frankness, and tempers are not aroused. The Great Debate has somewhat cooled down.

I've been looking at one of those odd institutions to which reference is always made – the parliamentary private secretary. It's helpful in bluffing your way through Westminster to be able to deploy the expression PPS once or twice a day. 'Oh Fred, of course Fred got the job because he was Bert's PPS, before Harold's July shake-up when Bert was sacked and Jim was moved to Bert's job and Hilda or was it Geoffrey got Jim's and . . .' As long as one eschews surnames and is careful not to specify what year one's talking about (the month is much more flashy) one can go on like this for ages. If somebody else is doing it, one can butt in and put them off their stride with an intelligent query: 'Are you sure it was Bert? I thought Fred was PPS to Jim before they rejigged the Department – you remember – and then Jim's constituency was redrawn . . .'

Occasionally such conversations are interrupted by a sharp scream. Another PPS has been found in the library, with a stiletto between his shoulder-blades. But these little murders do not cause much stir, hardly a raised eyebrow. One strolls along, views the body, murmurs sympathetically to the widow, and then resumes the conversation. When Harold Wilson sacked seven PPSs at once, in 1967, it was known as The Night of the Short Knives. 1977 is yet young, but already two PPSs have been sacked (that's Jeffrey Rooker and Joseph Dean) and one had had to resign in order to be able to vote against the Government (James Lamond). Two more, Bruce Grocot and Ivor Clemitson, were jolly nearly given the heave-ho after they voted for a *Tribune* amendment in the defence debate. There was a row in cabinet, Callaghan circulated a letter to ministers reminding them of the rules governing the behaviour of PPSs, which included the requirement to vote for the Government on all occasions. One PPS checked up, and claims that this rule had just been written in by Callaghan himself.

The constitutional position of PPSs is unclear (why, for instance, should they require the Prime Minister's approval?) and the practice varies. There is apparently no literature on the subject. Wilson's PPSs were tea-room spies. Conversations dried up, members fled, rooms emptied at their approach. Whatever they heard was reported straight back to Sir. They all (apart from one who died at his post) were found jobs afterwards. Such people became PPSs as a means of advancement, and sometimes the advancement can be spectacular. Jim Prior was Heath's PPS in Opposition. He was present as his master put the final touches to his first cabinet list. Prior looked at the list. 'I see,' he said, 'thanks a lot. Well, if that's all I get, I'm off. Good-bye.' Heath stopped him. 'What do you mean?' 'Look,' said Prior. 'I've been slaving for you for the past five years, and what do I get out of it? Why, *I'm not even in the cabinet*!' Heath crossed out the name of Joseph Godber and gave Prior Agriculture.

That is the most spectacular advance made by a PPS. If that's what you're after, then of course it's essential to become PPS to the right man. It's no use being Anthony Crosland's PPS, for instance, as you won't get any of the perks. Nor is there much point in working for Michael Foot if you've an ulterior motive: you won't find much out, and you won't get preferment. Go for the big shots, yes, but go for big shots who remember their own. Go – this may seem obvious, but it's true – for the Callaghans, the men who are building up teams of their own, trusted, loyal servants. Merlyn Rees was Callaghan's PPS, and look what happened to him. The PM's present adjutant is Roger Stott, a pleasant and popular MP. He looks like a Jolly Jack Tar – one can imagine him with a pigtail and a black straw hat, bell-bottomed trousers and a parrot on his shoulder, dancing a hornpipe somewhere in the South China Seas (which was indeed where he plied his former trade of merchant seaman). Part of his job is to go to the captain's cabin and explain that the crew is restless: weevils in the hard tack, cap'n, maggots in the bully-beef.

Callaghan is not accused of espionage in the way that Wilson was. Stott is more of an agent than a spy, and it is as agent that the PPS will often act. Joe Ashton, when he was working for Tony Benn, was an agent, and a very good one too. In the leadership contest last year it was essential that Benn should get a decent number of votes on the first ballot, and that meant attracting some which would obviously otherwise belong to Foot. Ashton appeared to achieve this by underestimating the strength of his hand, so that quite a few people thought: 'Poor old Tony, pity if he flops entirely . . . well, I suppose I'd better.' Then they were surprised at the number of people who had done the same.

Other roles for the PPS are: valet (Douglas-Home to Chamberlain); ambassador (Harold Davies, sent by Wilson to Vietnam); very junior minister. The last role is the most interesting, and it is here that the trouble begins. If a PPS really becomes involved in a Department, sees the papers, attends meetings, has an office, behaves much like a political adviser, he is bound to be regarded with suspicion by the civil service. In some cases, a senior civil servant reads out to the new PPS (but doesn't let him see) the rules with which he must comply: not speaking in the Commons about his own Department's work, for instance. In other cases nothing is said until the unfortunate steps out of line. A traditional role, since civil servants do not customarily speak directly to MPs (why not for heaven's sake?), is for the PPS to be sent to find out what such-and-such an MP means by a question he had put down. As long as the PPS wastes his time thus, the civil servants like him.

Now let us imagine a case in which a left-wing Secretary of State, at say the Department of Energy, who is already fortified by two political advisers of apparently rather left-wing views, decides he wants to take on a left-wing MP from Luton, for instance Brian Sedgemore, as his PPS, and perhaps to involve him rather intimately in the Department's work. Well and good, you say, but there are others who might be a little worried. The civil servants, for one. The Prime Minister, for another. The PM might look at this little gang and think: Hullo hullo, this looks a little dangerous, too many like-minded chaps under the same roof. And so, using protocol as an alibi, he might lay down some prior conditions. Although a PPS is not a member of the Government he must always vote for it. In this way, the PM ensures either that he is restricted in Parliament, or that the jolly little Lefties' think-tank is nipped in the bud (if you can nip a think-tank in the bud). If there are over 30 PPSs in all, plus the whole of the rest of the Government, all of them obliged to vote the right way, this leaves very little room for opposition within the party. This makes life simpler for the whips, the PM, and democracy.

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Jack Jones*

In Defence of Bullock

Bullock has opened a new chapter in the struggle to achieve a real democracy for working people. As the report says, 'the coming of the age of democracy in our society is a process that inevitably affects the whole of people's lives, it cannot be excluded from the workplace'. It is just this democratic imperative that lies behind the proposals of the report.

It is only by taking places on the board that working people can have a proper, a continuous and a real say on the important decisions of an enterprise. In the nationalised industries and in the large private companies we have already taken collective bargaining almost to its logical limits. To have a say over corporate strategy employees must be where the decisions are taken, that is on the top board.

It should be the board of directors of an enterprise, and not just a 'supervisory board' along the European system, because it is quite clear that the latter gives to employees only an illusion of power and influence, without the reality. In Germany, in many companies, the supervisory board has become a reactive and rather passive body, meeting only three or four times a year. The real decision-making power lies with the technically lower-level management board. It would seem that the minority report's support for representation on a statutory board was designed merely to restrict the ability of employee representatives to influence the management of an enterprise's affairs. And the CBI have even rejected this modest proposal!

There are strong reasons for wanting to transform the running of industry, to place it on a new basis – the basis of consent and joint agreement. This is the right of a mature and intelligent working people. If the appointed spokesmen of industry would come down from their self-erected barricades, they might begin to understand the benefits to all of us that can flow from this transformation of industry. The Bullock Report puts it in these terms: 'During our inquiry we found a widespread conviction that the problem of Britain as an industrialised nation is not a lack of native capacity in its working population so much as a failure to draw out their energies and skill to anything like their full potential. It is our belief that the way to release those energies, to provide greater satisfaction in the workplace and to assist in raising the level of productivity and efficiency in British industry – and with it the living standards of the nation – is not by recrimination or exhortation but by putting the relationship between capital and labour on to a new basis.'

Already Conservative spokesmen and some top industrialists are busy weaving a whole tissue of half-truths and misrepresentation around the recommendations of the report. Their campaign is a not very subtle attack on the whole of the trade union movement, its aims and aspirations. One MP spoke of handing over power to trade unions 'representing only 40 per cent of working people'. Robert Carr spoke in the Lords of disenfranchising 'many millions of workers'. Such spokesmen show not just an ignorance of the contents of the report but an abysmal lack of understanding of industrial relations in Britain. For the truth is that the Bullock proposals refer to companies employing over 2,000 people. Now, in these companies, and particularly in the largest of British firms, trade union membership is approaching 100 per cent. The evidence is there in Bullock for all with eyes to see. If we look at manufacturing industry, (and excluding employment in establishments with less than 200 workers)

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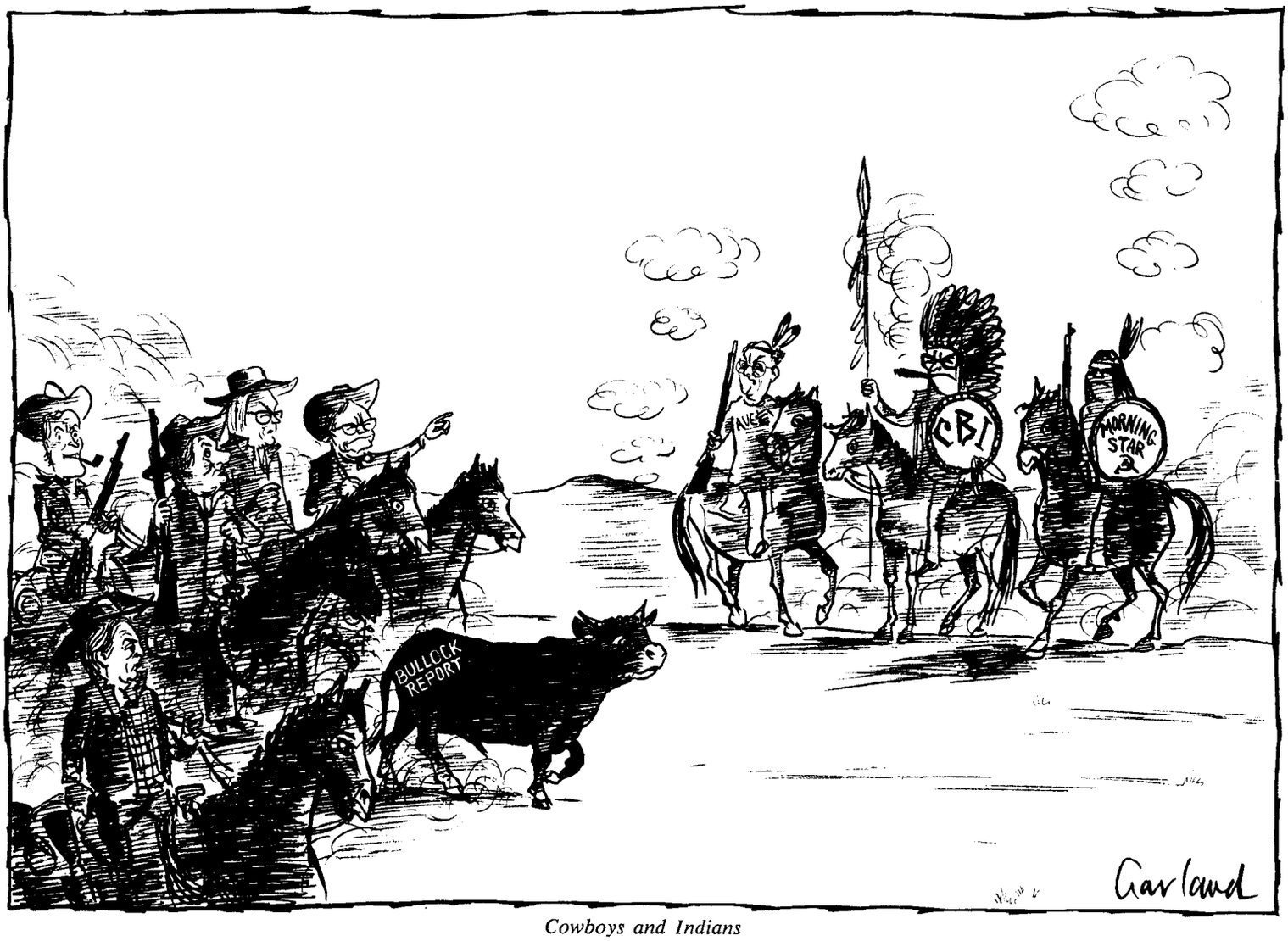

Cowboys and Indians

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then trade union membership is on average 89.2 per cent of the workforce. It is only in small firms, in agriculture and forestry and distribution for example, that union membership is low.

The demands for 'works or employee councils' show a pathetic level of understanding of the workings of British industry. At least one major association of employers has argued that 'the procedures, systems and institutions which have been established in most European countries for providing joint consultation or decision-making have been largely alternative to collective bargaining . . . this is particularly true of works councils . . . this has been overlooked in the debate on worker participation and industrial democracy which has tended to assume rather more for the works council system than the facts justify.'*

In Europe, works councils are tending to be displaced by a growing shop steward movement, just as happened in this country in those firms (like Lucas, Cadburys, ICI and Courtaulds for example) which many years ago had works councils of the *old* type but who now accept the shop stewards as the effective and representative voice of their workforce. The proponents of a works council or for building up consultative committees at plant level miss the point at issue. Working people do not want advisory arrangements under which they are given information and allowed to express an opinion; rather they want a say in the desion-making itself. This can only come through basing industrial democracy on the existing shop floor trade union organisation.

The 'infrastructure' that the CBI wish to see established is already there. Indeed there is a measure of agreement between us here. Industrial democracy should be built from the base upwards, but the base is there, in the shop floor organisation of trade unions.

Working people have over the last 100 years or so organised and united into trade unions to represent them collectively over issues such as their terms and conditions of employment. Now that it is recognised that employees should also have a say over corporate strategy, what more logical or rational way to achieve this than through the trade union machinery, and what could be more destructive and divisive than to establish a quite separate machinery for board level representation? That same trade union machinery will provide the expertise and independent strength necessary to support employee representatives and to enable them to play an effective role on the board. It will also provide an *established and trusted channel of communication* to and from the shop floor and the office. The question is a simple one – if we accept the need for employees to have a say in the control of their own destinies then what is the most effective means of achieving this? Working people have already provided the answer – their trade union organisation.

Another complete misrepresentation of the report has been the suggestion that this will increase trade union patronage, and that it will be the national trade unions 'appointing' people to the boards. Apart from the recommendation of the report that representation be tied to trade union shop floor machinery, the method of electing representatives to the board is left very much for the workforce in each company to decide. In fact the report states, that the trade unions in a company might decide to hold a secret ballot of all employees in the company. The emphasis is very much on flexibility, to allow the workforce itself, through its established representative institutions, to devise the means for representation on the board. The clear intention is to have *direct* employees of the company on the board and *not* trade union leaders from outside. In addition there would be no 'fat' fees for the job and moreover the system could not be introduced without the approval of a secret ballot of the *employees* of the company concerned.

The Bullock Report is an historic document. The Government has been presented with a challenge – to give to ordinary working people (and that includes middle management as well as shop floor and office employees) a say in how their lives are organised. The Government is committed to industrial democracy and it has promised legislation not just for the private sector but also for the nationalised industries. It must be recognised that the nationalisation of our basic industries, in the form that it was carried out, has been a disappointment to many who saw in public ownership something that would transform the role of the workers in the industries concerned. We now have the chance, through the application of Bullock-type proposals, to put that right.

It is only right that there should be consultations on Bullock. *But consultation must not be a polite excuse for delay.* It took nearly a hundred years to extend the suffrage to every adult man and woman. We cannot afford the luxury of a 100-year wait for the industrial franchise. 1977 must be the year when a Labour government secured for the mass of working people not just the right to a vote in a parliamentary election, but a right to a real measure of influence at their workplace.

***Worker Participation – the European Experience** *Coventry and District Engineering Employers' Association 1974.*

Mary Holland

A Provisional Return

The message of last weekend's spate of firebombs in the West End was clear enough. The Provos were back in London with the capacity to strike, if necessary, at the most crowded and vulnerable of city centre targets. Exactly whom that message was intended to impress, and why, is a more complex matter to unravel.

Certainly the bombs were linked to the trial of four men for the Balcombe Street siege, and for the offences including seven murders which preceded it. If the details of the organisation of an IRA unit which were beginning to emerge at the trial were likely to horrify the British public, there was also the happy ending that the police had got the bombers and had put them behind bars. After last Saturday's bombs there was no such comfort.

But making this grim point to the British public and its rulers was only one part of last weekend's exercise. At least as important to the Provisional leadership is the likely effect within their own ranks, and in particular on the angry and restless militants in Belfast. Viewed from this angle Saturday's bombs show that the stresses within the IRA, which have been growing for some months, are now very dangerous.

Ever since talks between the British Government officials in Northern Ireland and the Provisional Sinn Fein broke down, morale within the IRA has been flagging badly. It has now become clear to even the most dedicated and unquestioning of street-fighters that the recent campaign against the security forces in the Province has failed to impress the British Government, and that Jim Callaghan is not going to be so easily shifted from his do-nothing policy in the North. The Provos, it seems, are further away from the negotiating table than at any time in the past five years. In the South their most articulate leaders are in jail. In the North propaganda victories have been very few and far between. Even the campaign for political status for Repubican prisoners failed to gain any widespread public support. So, in recent months, the pressures on the Dublin-based leadership to do something, almost anything, have been growing. In particular there has been the insistent demand to use the one trump-card which the Provisionals have traditionally held in reserve – a bombing campaign on the British mainland.

A few weeks ago I was told by a member of the Provisional Army Council that

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their organisation in Britain had been virtually smashed after the Balcombe Street arrests, but that they had now regrouped and had the capacity to strike in major cities. This might have been dismissed as mere bravado had he not gone on to explain, coldly and pragmatically, the arguments against such a campaign. These had little to do with the effects such a campaign would have on British public opinion. He believed that a major bombing campaign in England would lead the Dublin Government to introduce much harsher measures against the IRA, including quite probably internment. It is known that, after the murder of the British ambassador in Dublin last summer, Dr Connor Cruise O'Brien did assure British ministers that the Irish cabinet would not flinch from internment if it became necessary, an assurance which was apparently less than welcome at Westminster, where internment in the North is regarded as a disastrous mistake.

To understand why such arguments weigh heavily with the Provisional leadership one must look at the kind of men who now make up the army council. As guerrilla leaders go, they are men who have grown old and cautious. Most of them are veterans of campaigns fought 20, even 30 years ago, when to be in the IRA meant being one of a tiny handful of fanatics, who had no real hope of success in their own lifetime but were motivated by one guiding idea – to keep the Republican tradition alive and to hand on the struggle to another generation. Even today, at its lowest ebb their support still surpasses anything they can have dreamt of as young men themselves. Their first concern is still to survive, to keep the organisation intact, to pass on the dream of a free and united Ireland.

The young militants in Belfast don't see things quite like that. They have little patience with the hallowed mysteries of a clandestine leadership, although they are still sufficiently disciplined not to defy it openly. But their view of the situation is dictated less by history than by their own direct experience of the British soldiers in their streets. Locked in small tight communities, they are confident of the support of their own people. Unlike some of their leaders, they do not feel themselves to be outlaws, however much the media tell them that they are. Political considerations like keeping the Dublin Government off their backs carry little weight with them. One government or another has always been on their backs. Whatever the hardships of the past, they believe that they are bearing the burden of Republicanism now. They are impatient for a victory and they want to know, more and more insistently, why the leadership is not doing more to get it. Failing a victory, they want at the very least a show of strength which will demonstrate to their own recruits that the IRA is still a serious proposition to be reckoned with.

When I visited Belfast a few weeks ago the only mood to be detected among rank-and-file Provos was one of genuine bewilderment as to why they were not bombing England. After last Saturday it seems that they have been allowed their show of strength. Whether it will be sufficient to satisfy them for very long is another matter.

Dublin

John Griffith

The Politics of the Judiciary

'The judges' said the Attorney-General last week 'have their prejudices too. But one assumes that they leave them behind when they go into court.' In the Court of Appeal Lord Denning had said: 'There is an association called the National Association for Freedom of which we know nothing except that it has a secretary . . . It is said by its critics to be a right-wing pressure group. But that is no concern of ours.' And, in a phrase which recalls memories, Lord Denning referred to the case before him as arising 'out of events in a far-off land', on this occasion South Africa.

So the judges claim to be politically neuter. 'We have but one prejudice' Lord Denning told the Attorney-General. 'That is to uphold the law. And that we will do, whatever befall.' Especially, we may assume, if the law is one the judges have just invented. For we must not forget that much of the law is made by judges, changed by judges; and that statutory laws made by Parliament are interpreted by judges, sometimes so perversely that those laws have to be replaced by new statutory provisions.

The political neutrality of the judiciary is a myth, one of those fictions our rulers delight in, because it confuses and obscures, so that the uninitiated shake their heads at yet another mystery. Our political system thrives on obfuscations. Lord Devlin has put it well:

> In theory the judiciary is the neutral force between Government and the governed. The judge interprets and applies the law without favour to either . . . British judges have never practised such detachment . . . In the criminal law the judges regard themselves as at least as much concerned as the executive with the preservation of law and order.

But the judicial concern goes far beyond the preservation of law and order. Examples are abundant. The complex story of how the National Industrial Relations Court and the Law Lords sought first to enforce the new Conservative law on trade unions and then hastily combined to spring the five dockers from prison showed the judges' interest in avoiding economic upset. Their arrogation of the power to determine our moral behaviour was expressed by the highest court once when Viscount Simonds said:

> I entertain no doubt that there remains in the courts of law a residual power to enforce the supreme and fundamental purpose, to conserve not only the safety and order but also the moral welfare of the state.

NEXT WEEK

Paul Johnson
Labour and the New Leviathan
An analysis of the threats to democratic socialism

Neil Kinnock
The Bullock Report
A critique from the Left

The offending act, he said, might appear as an affront to public decency or as intending to provoke libidinous desires or as undermining public conduct or simply as being prejudicial to the public welfare. Which covers a fair range of human activity not universally regarded as criminal.

Then there was Lord Hailsham's own invention in 1973 of the crime of conspiracy to trespass to deal with sit-ins and occupations previously regarded as, at most, civil offences. And the Law Lords' severe limitations of race relations legislation in the club cases which have recently been reversed, at least in part, by parliamentary legislation. The story could be continued almost endlessly through decisions of the courts limiting the right to strike, extending police powers, limiting personal rights, extending contempt of court, maintaining government secrecy, controlling ministerial discretion, and punishing student protest. Some (even all) of these judicial policies will appear as admirable to some as they are appalling to others. But to deny them the status of political judgments requires a most restrictive use of language.

As Lord Denning is so much in the news these days, let us look at four of his more recent judgments. The first in 1975 is to be wholly applauded. This was when property developers in Islington 'stepped in, bought up houses, persuaded tenants to leave, did up the houses and sold them at a profit'. Some social workers conducted a wholly peaceful picket outside the developers' offices. Lord Denning defended their right to protest, even invoking Peterloo. The majority decision went the other way.

But, in the other three cases, Lord Denning as the great upholder of individual rights looks less plausible. Ministers sometimes come under his lash but trade unions he likes even less. The Industrial Relations Act empowered the minister, when a strike had been called by the union, to insist on a ballot of its members whenever he had reasons for doubting whether the members were acting in accordance with their own wishes. In a leading case in 1972, Lord Denning, faced (he said) 'with a grave threat to the national economy' found ministerial reasons which were not easily perceptible to the naked, or indeed to the assisted, eye. The ballot totally vindicated the union.

In the same year, a girl student was found to have a man in her college room at night. The principal who had the sole power to initiate disciplinary action decided only to ask the girl to find accommodation outside the college. Two hundred students at the college signed a petition saying they had on one or more occasions broken the terms of occupancy. The college governors met, changed the rules so as to enable disciplinary action to be initiated by themselves, applied the new rules retrospectively to this student, set up a hearing committee to which they appointed some of themselves, and expelled

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the student from the college. There were other irregularities but Lord Denning swept them all aside. Of the girl's conduct he said:

> That is a fine example to set to others! And she a girl training to be a teacher! I expect the governors and the staff all thought that she was quite an unsuitable person for it. She would never make a teacher. No parent would knowingly entrust their child to her care.

And thirdly, to take one case out of several concerning squatters, those fashionable whipping boys, Lord Denning said of a married man with two children – one aged five years, another five months – who were homeless:

> They stayed with friends for a little while, but then they were told to leave. They were desperate, he says. They had not any relatives to assist them. They went in desperation to the Housing Department. They could not help them. They were forced to walk the streets.

So they occupied empty property owned by Southwark London Borough Council which was scheduled for redevelopment at some indefinite time in the future. When threatened with eviction, they tried the Royal Courts of Justice. But, said Lord Denning:

> The courts must, for the sake of law and order, take a firm stand. They must refuse to admit the plea of necessity to the hungry and homeless: and trust that their distress will be relieved by the charitable and the good.

Remember? 'We have but one prejudice. That is to uphold the law and that we will do whatever befall. Nothing shall deter us from doing our duty.' And Denning was undeterred. The judiciary does not of course call its prejudices political, or moral, or social. It calls them the public interest.

In a forthcoming book I have argued, on the basis of decisions since 1950, that the three main strands which make up this public interest are first, the judges' view (based on a strongly authoritarian political philosophy) of the economic, social and moral attitudes which should predominate in society; secondly, the protection of private property; and thirdly, a bundle of Conservative beliefs of which the most obvious are the desirability of keeping the trade unions in their place, and the undesirability of attempting the legislative control of racial discrimination.

I am not saying that judges should be neutral. I do not believe they can be. But to pretend that they do not act politically, are not political animals, is absurd.

Leo Plendello

Mentmore as Mortmain

Mentmore is a High Victorian prodigy house. The term coined by Summerson to describe the great Elizabethan houses is wholly appropriate. Mentmore stands above a panorama of Buckinghamshire, its many towers silhouetted against the sky, a romantic vision recalling Wollaton and calculated, like Burghley, to express grandeur and importance. For this beau-ideal of the Victorian stately home Sir Joseph Paxton adopted the palazzo plan with a great central hall. Paxton's patron, Baron Meyer de Rothschild MP, was collector, host and patron of the turf on the heroic scale. The contents of Mentmore form a major museum of European art. When Baron Meyer died in 1873 his creation, exceptional even in an age of great collections, was complete.

Mentmore has never been studied; the last published account was in 1890. But it is already evident that the contents have survived to a remarkable degree intact, and that the ensemble is not a wealthy magpie's hoard, but a substantial work of art. The quality is superb: Baron Meyer was a worthy follower of Beckford. The architectural framework is distinguished – Louis XV boiseries *à la* Versailles and great Renaissance public spaces. The interiors all have their subtly counterpointed identities; the Green Drawing Room, with boulle, ebony and ivory is nobly masculine, in contrast to the elegant and feminine White Drawing Room. But these are no pedantic 'period rooms', they are original creations. And the grandest of all is the Grand Hall. Forty feet high, with a Rubens fireplace, lamps from the Bucentaur and chairs from the Doge's Palace, it is an exhilarating synthesis, as splendid in its generation as the High Great Chamber at Hardwick.

Mentmore survives alone. There exists no comparable house from the High Victorian age, the apogee of Britain's power and prestige. Georgianised officers' messes, health farms and hotels: great Victorian houses are now landscape architecture, shells without meaning. By a remarkable chance the house ideally fitted to be a national monument of its kind was the lone survivor. And in 1974 the 6th Earl of Rosebery died, leaving substantial duty to be paid. The 7th Earl decided to sell Mentmore. His intentions and Sotheby's interest soon leaked out. Alarm signals clanged; the late Lord Crawford, the respected *grand seigneur* of the art world, urged rescue, and Roy Strong began to agitate. In early 1975 Strong and a Department of the Environment man visited the house. It was agreed that Lord Rosebery should prepare a package for acquisition via the Land Fund.

Then things went flat. The DoE failed to explore financing and practicalities. Their liaison with the Estate Duty Office was weak. Nor were the museums pitched into the negotiations, although Peter Thornton, the expert in this field, had urged this in *The Destruction of the Country House*. Thus at Mentmore Lord Rosebery, an electrician by avocation, and his co-executor, an assurance company director, were left to their own devices and out of their depth. But Sotheby's were to hand. Delicious irony, the auction combine found itself, not for the first time, in the equivocal role of guardian of the national heritage. Although the Victoria & Albert Museum had offered help they were not called in, and Sotheby's seem to have drawn up the package without research into the nature and arrangement of the historic ensembles it was designed to preserve. The lists which arrived in February 1976 were a bald inventory. The deal was simple: house, park and part contents for sale, plus most of the rest on loan. Crude as it was, the Sotheby's package was the basis for a settlement. Now was surely the time for the DoE to spring into action.

But no. The V & A, with the experience and skills to take on Mentmore, was left straining at the leash; the Estate Duty Office, with the fiscal expertise, was equally restive. The next move was in May: the Historic Buildings Council visit, an academic outing lent comic overtones by the audibly oil-and-water relationship between the Dowager Lady Rosebery and her son. The HBC is a passionless but reputable body with a strong bias towards Georgian good taste and Jennifer Jenkins as a capable chairman. Mentmore was not their meat but, acknowledging its unique historic importance, they urgently recommended take-over to the DoE. In September, Alma Birk paid a visit to the house. At last, in early December, she recommended acceptance to Peter Shore. It was not perfect: the V & A had still not vetted it in detail. But, thanks to the Land Fund, the cost posed no problem. Maintenance was more difficult, and here the DoE's solution was simple but eloquent of their lack of serious application. They had an anonymous benefactor. The fate of the only great High Victorian country house ensemble depended on his staying the course. He didn't. There were no fall-back positions.

Peter Shore had little compunction about deciding: 'I can't understand why the nation should be so concerned about French furniture collected by a Jew' may be apocryphal, but expresses well the flippant philistinism of a politician who had never visited the house and has never been noted for interest in the national heritage. News of the rejection seems to have been a private New Year's present to Sotheby's, who had been applying pressure to print their catalogues. The public announcement came three weeks later. At a hurriedly called press conference at Mentmore the Dowager Lady Rosebery who, with seven servants, lives on a diet of Tiepolos, pronounced that she couldn't imagine the inhabitants of those 'horrid little houses' at nearby Milton Keynes would be interested in Mentmore. Such patrician hauteur was a nice match for Peter Shore.

The smash-up was not to be a *fait accompli* – secret dealing has been succeeded by open debate. There is a sense of betrayal of Labour's record on country houses. The money is there to buy Mentmore now, at a bargain price. Why not put it in mothballs for a year so that a solution can be worked out in public? The environmentalist organisation SAVE has produced an illustrated booklet to argue this case. It merits an answer.

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Alexander Cockburn

Roots, Symbolism and Mr Carter

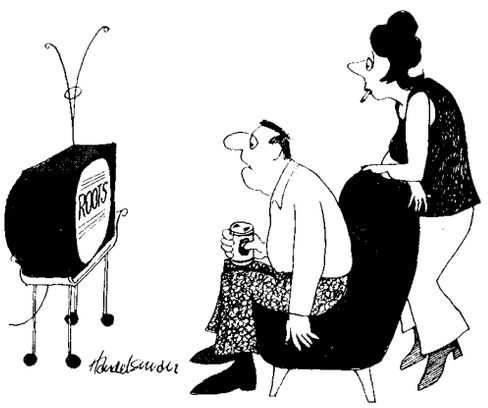
With a zest presumably befitting the birth of a new presidency the United States seems suddenly to have become much concerned with symbolism. Much of this has to do with Jimmy Carter who, as I remarked a couple of weeks ago, has always had a penchant for cheap essays in this mode. He walked to the White House down Pennsylvania Avenue, symbol of democratic closeness to the American people: he ordered the main doors of the Justice Department, closed since the insurgent Sixties, to be opened – symbolically admitting his crony Griffin Bell: amid the rigours of the winter he urged that the nation's thermostats be turned down to 65 degrees.

This last symbolic act is a traditional presidential response to the energy crisis – conservation with a flick of the finger. How effective the recommendation will be is unclear. I was briefly in the White House the other day and the temperature seemed hotter than 65. But my blood may have been warmed by the sight of young Amy Carter idly fiddling with a typewriter behind the press room: perhaps even her presence and desultory activity was meant to symbolise the Administration's private feelings about the mental age of the White House press corps.

We could go on for some time about the onrush of symbolism. Carter has cut back on the use of official limousines – symbols of an imperial presidency. He has suggested that journalists be admitted to observe cabinet meetings, which would evidently then become even more symbolic than they are now. Mondale's frog-hop across the world was 'symbolic' of a desire for good relations with old allies. What is worrying, lest I be accused of undue cynicism, is that all these gestures are almost invariably described as symbolic rather than substantive, which makes one think that reality might soon start violently objecting to usurpation of its traditional role in political life.

Carter could always solve this potential conflict by creating a Secretary, of cabinet rank, in charge of symbolic gestures and have another functionary, toiling in more squalid surroundings, to superintend the Department of Brutal Realism. Actually Dr Harold Brown, now running the Defence Department, has already nicely combined these two roles. As a symbolic gesture he has announced that in his bid to reduce the next defence budget the Pentagon will purchase five rather than eight B-1 bombers from Rockwell International. But this is also an act of brutal realism since the purchase of five of these costly and already outdated aircraft indicates that the B-1 programme has not in fact been killed off, as Carter so often hinted it would be during his election campaign.

But the talk of the nation has now ascended to a more universal level of symbolism and concerns itself with the reverberations of the most successful television series in American history. This series was the dramatisation through last week of Alex Haley's book *Roots*. Since *Roots* has now been bought by the BBC you will soon be able to judge the thing for yourselves; the theme is the importation of slaves from the West Coast of Africa and the black experience of slavery in the United States. One of the network companies – ABC – took the gamble of converting Haley's saga (involving his own final discovery of his actual lineage on the Gold Coast) into 12 hours of television on eight consecutive nights. The results exceeded all expectations. Some episodes were watched by over 70 million people. Four of these episodes are now among the ten most watched programmes in the history of the medium: the final episode was watched by 80 million people, outstripping the previous leader which was – appropriately enough – *Gone With The Wind*.



'Man, you give some people an inch and the next thing they want is ancestors.'

This incredible success has provoked a flood of comment. Newspapers have devoted much space to the *Roots* craze, quoting extensively the expressions of indignation of black people at this revelation of their antecedents and the barbaric cruelties endured by their ancestors. Corresponding expressions of guilt by whites have also been recorded. There has been much elevating talk about the series's achievement in exorcising the past by making it manifest: talk which closely parallels similar conjecture about the arrival of a Southerner in the White House having exorcised the wounds of the Civil War. Indeed, the parallel has been explicitly drawn in a triumphant equation proposing that Carter plus *Roots* equals conquest of historical and race trauma.

The fact that commentators can blandly announce that blacks and whites alike are suddenly discovering the realities of American history, in however commercialised a form, seems to say something about American education today. But the sudden national attention on the era between the slave cargoes and emancipation also points up a tremendous irony: that even as the past is being rediscovered, the horrors of the present are being vigorously repressed.

Brutal realism: blacks make up a large amount of the nation's 8 per cent unemployed. Crammed into decaying urban centres they are offered the least likelihood of escape. Black teenage unemployment in American cities often exceeds 40 per cent. More subtly, the laws and rhetoric of the decade are moving against them. The Burger Supreme Court is very different from Warren's, which presided over the civil rights decisions of the Fifties and Sixties. White liberal intellectuals no longer exhibit the enthusiasms and commitment of a former time. The resonance of the word 'welfare' now evokes 'chisellers' rather than victims of a cruel system.

The fiscal crisis in many American cities has accelerated this swing. Over the last two years, to take the situation here in New York, the businessmen who actually dictate the destinies of the city, have propounded with increasing confidence the doctrine of planned shrinkage. By attrition and sabotage of social services such as public hospitals, education, welfare, transport and so forth the city will become increasingly unendurable for the poor and unemployed to inhabit. Those who remain will make up a cheaper labour force and live with reduced expectations: those who depart, in this version of the Cambodian solution, will be forced into rootless migrancy – towards the South West and other areas in need of cheap labour. Thus will the Great Trek of whites and blacks towards the northern cities be reversed.

In short, the saga of *Roots* could do with a few more episodes which would – perhaps with decreasing mass appeal – bring us up to the present day. A closing episode, even an afterword, might well deal with the first clear demonstration of the new Administration's attitude towards the wretched of the American earth. By this I mean Carter's economic package to stimulate the economy over the next two years .

As long forecast, the package included a tax rebate this year of $50 per person and and investment tax credit for business. The US Treasury already loses about $8,000m. a year from investment tax credit, which largely goes to capital intensive rather than labour intensive enterprises. Carter, by increasing the credit another 2 per cent, is giving business another $2,000m. Most of this will go to the 75 largest companies in the US with about $1,000m. probably going to Atandt alone. Meanwhile, only one-fourth of the package will go towards the creation of public jobs.

Perhaps an expanded *Roots* could end in the city of Detroit, a social catastrophe with – at times – 70 per cent black teenage unemployment: a zone from which whites have long since fled to the suburbs, where murderous black gangs roam the streets, as the city nears default on its debts. It is a city which could do with about $1,000m. in federal aid right now for public jobs and programmes. It would have been a fine, symbolic gesture for the Carter Administration to have offered such a sum. Timid, conservative, brutal 'realism' seems far more likely to prevail.

New York

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Stefan Heym*

A Month of Good News

I have given up smoking – not like Mark Twain, who did it several times, but permanently. So I must surely be able to give up the Western poison which is poured into my ear, evening after evening, as if I were standing under a waterfall. The weather forecast aside, how long can their hopelessly chaotic world survive, anyway? I shall switch channels. To ours. To *Aktuelle Kamera* [the German Democratic Republic's main news programme]. Not as competitive game-playing – a bit from there, a bit from here – not what so many citizens of the German Democratic Republic do, in the childish belief that they then have an objective picture. I shall practise total continence, like the zealots who have long done so in order to avoid conflicts of conscience – or the inhabitants of Dresden and Görlitz, who cannot get the West even with the most powerful aerials. Behaving properly, every evening at 7.30 p.m. for half an hour, must surely have a healthy effect on one's state of mind.

* * *

I begin on 2 October. It's a propitious moment: on the next day there are elections over there in West Germany. (I know that from watching the wrong channel – Schmidt is against Kohl, 'Freedom against Socialism' – I shall spare myself all the shadow-boxing, the hiccupping opinion polls, the first estimated results. Even shadow-boxing can be unpleasantly exciting). Then there are our elections, on the 17th: a highspot too, except that the dangerous tension – who'll win? – is missing. And finally, on 2 November, there are the US elections, after Nixon honest Ford versus honest Carter. I must keep it up till then. By then the effect of my experiment should have made itself clear, and the endless uncertainly which switching from one news programme to another induces should be laid to rest, or at least noticeably lessened.

It really is a perverse set of circumstances. One lives, works, has one's being, loves, inside real socialism, but gets most of one's information from people who damn with filth any idea of the improvement or prosperity of any kind of socialism. These circumstances are only so extreme in the GDR: there is no West-Czech, West-Polish or, indeed, West-Soviet television. Perhaps this will change with satellites. I hope so.

* * *

The newsreaders: whether they are men or women, they sit up very straight, their gaze earnestly concentrated, as if there was something there to concentrate on; and they speak carefully, in syllables. I can't remember a single one of them smiling, in the course of the 33 or so half-hour programmes which I watched. I also noticed no emotion in their voices, even during the most dreadful announcements, such as the massacre of students in Thailand or the sinking of the *Böhlen* oil-tanker. It was with precisely the same lack of fellow-feeling that a teacher in the state grammar school in Chemnitz used to tell us as boys that '*Gallia divisa est in partes tres*': it occurs to me now that the newsreaders have just the same schoolmasterly tone of voice, in which there is the underlying warning: Listen carefully, I'm only going to tell you this once.

I don't think it's their fault. They must have been persuaded to do it: and the words they are given to say are not quite the kind which lead to dramatic emphasis or even to an emotional stare. They embody a state institution, they embody authority, even under difficult circumstances. The language which they have to speak is not a simple one.

* * *

The language is High German, Democratic Republic-style, bureaucratic in a cultivated manner, full of high-flown nouns, decorated with suitable adjectives: the sentences require deep breathing from the speakers and equally deep concentration from the listeners. But understanding is made easier by the clichés strewn through the text: codewords, in fact, which set off certain processes in the minds of a public trained to read papers, attend meetings, go to educational courses.

Here is a list, in no way complete, of phrases all noted down during one month and which might perhaps be useful to a psychiatrist:

Change (is always)	*basic*
Accomplishment	*resolute*
Exchange of views	*comprehensive*
Atmosphere	*creative*
Request	*primary*
Consultation	*ongoing*
Decision	*wide-ranging*
Basis	*unchangeable*
Mutual confidence	*unshakeable*
Recognition	*impressive*
Achievement	*complete*
Strengthening	*many-sided*
Premise	*basic*
Recognition	*world-wide*
Growth	*dynamic*
Agreement	*million-fold*

The structure of the programmes is uncomplicated and reassuringly monotonous. So they do not begin, for instance, with exciting headlines, to grab the viewers and chain them to the set. Oh no. First, there are state telegrams and state receptions, official speeches and official greetings, the whole ceremony of *gravitas*, which really should include wigs and silk frock-coats. Then there is an optimistic mish-mash of little stories, decorated with statistics and short interviews about the economic life of the GDR (the order can be changed). It is only after 15 minutes of pictures of this orderly country that one learns that people were shooting each other in the Lebanon, discussing in Geneva, dying in Thailand, striking in France, going to prison in Soweto, being tortured in Chile. After that the economic news comes round again, but 'negative' this time, because it is from the West: unemployment, inflation, poverty, violence, but higher profits for the monopolies. One feels relieved. We don't have that kind of thing. Occasionally there is something cheery: during a storm a cartload of cows on the way to a slaughterhouse escaped, and American policeman had to catch them. At the end there is a report from one of our brother countries – from a factory, school, restaurant, library, warehouse, with short interviews cut in: everything is going well, everyone is happy, the Plan will be fulfilled, new initiatives are being developed, the socialist world is in good health.

But they also do not overload the viewer, so far as possible, with exhilarating optimism. So there are action shots of fighting or unrest in South Africa and in the Israeli-occupied Arab territories. (These films come from western film crews.) Apart from that we are shown landscapes, harvesters bouncing across a field, a crane swinging over a building site, interiors with or without machines, a man with a helmet holding on to a bit of steel. But even here the camera swiftly changes from what is actually happening and concentrates on the duologue between the reporter and the worker; the worker stands there, he makes an effort to say the right thing, you can see how he sighs with relief when it's over. And then the lovely silent films – there's a leading comrade, we see him talking to a leading comrade from a brother state, or to a well-known economist, or a mate; the leading comrade smiles; he opens and shuts his mouth, waves his hands, all to no point. The actual words are taken over by the newsreader – he lets us know what the leading comrade was saying to those important people.

But most of the time the newsreader sits tidily at his desk, with a map, a photo, a text, as background. It is all very restful.

* * *

I wonder whether this particular structure of reporting was simply created to put me, and others who hunger nervously for news, in a pleasantly comatose frame of mind: or whether our friends on *Aktuelle Kamera*, who put the whole together, have a quite diffent scale of world values. Perhaps I look at things with sick eyes; perhaps they are the ones who are right, with their view that the reception of the Comrade Chairman of the Revision Committee in the Central Committee of a brother party by the Comrade General-Secretary of our party is such a remarkable occasion that it should lead the

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programme; or that the production of the 59th wagon of a new series of railway wagons proves the superiority of socialism to such an extent that it should run second.

Apparently they are right; There is a method in it. It even looks as though *Aktuelle Kamera* works on a series of printed forms, in which only names need to be inserted.

It is soothing: one feels cared for.

* * *

An example of journalistic self-denial, when the reporters had a chance truly to excite their viewers: on 13 October the cosmonaut Bykowsky announced, in an aside to a speech, 'early cooperation with your people on a space station'. Next day, Herr Hager, a member of the Politburo, hoped that 'soon, within the present Five Year Plan, the first GDR cosmonaut would circle the blue planets at the side of Bykowsky and Axjonow in a space-ship', and the day after that Honecker confirmed that 'the day is not far off when a citizen of the GDR will fly the cosmic ways with Soviet cosmonauts'.

That is, surely, a sensation. In the media of other countries, who want the public to hold its breath, it would be *the* headline – a GDR citizen the first German in space! Who will it be, what's his name, where's he from, is he married, are there children, where's he training, is there just one or are there others? But nothing on *Aktuelle Kamera*: the speeches were faded out, the GDR cosmonaut forgotten; perhaps it was all a vision created by my still twitching nerves.

Do they somehow rely on people watching West German television anyway, and learning what is important from that? On 11 October, for instance, I heard about a gross interference by the West Berlin mayor Schütz in the internal affairs of the GDR and of various nasty remarks he had made: he should (it said on our TV) think carefully just where he is. But what did he say? How did he 'interfere'? Nothing. And then, out of the blue on 20 October, we have a denial of a Western statement that 200,000 GDR citizens have put in applications to leave the country. The 'official spokesman' has said this was sheer invention. If only he had kept quiet, because now I instantly become uneasy, and ask myself: how many were there, then, two or 20 or 200?

* * *

The elections. On the evening of 2 October *Aktuelle Kamera* wrapped itself in cosy silence about the West German elections, due to take place next day: even on election day, at 7.30 p.m., the occasion went unrecognised. At 10.15 p.m., on the late news, we had the estimated results, and next day the analysis by a commentator: the Federal German elections mirrored the deep-lying, broad-based discontent of the voters, but had overcome the anxieties there would have been about the possible foreign policy of a CDU/CSU government.

Our elections were, contrary to my expectations, really exciting. I was seized by an almost genuine election fever, when I watched the figures on the evening of 17 October on *Aktuelle Kamera*: Bishofswerde 98.2 per cent, Oschatz 98.92 per cent, Ilmenau 99.1 per cent and Stralsund actually 99.51 per cent. I was gratified to hear the commentator next evening assuring us once again that 'we don't put on shows; the citizens are not led into errors by speeches and promises and then later mocked' – unlike the West.

Honest Carter did beat honest Ford after all.

* * *

My blood pressure has gone down in these four weeks; my weight up. I look at the world with the comfortable view of my friends from *Aktuelle Kamera*. What is not reported today will be forgotten by tomorrow. I have, I must admit, met many amiable GDR citizens through their interviews – a sculptor from Freiberg, who made a bronze donkey which children ride in the park; a cook in a factory canteen, who said she was happy when her colleagues enjoyed their food; a steelworker in front of the main furnace who looked at a high-up bureaucrat in an indescribable way and remarked: 'The heat gets under your skin, doesn't it?'

I've had enough. You can always train yourself. At the moment, my right arm has gone to sleep; my left arm has gone to sleep; I'm going to sleep.

© *Stefan Heym*

Peter Wilby

The Case For Numeracy

Everybody, by now, will have heard the horror stories of school leavers who don't know their tables, can't add simple fractions and can't distinguish a decimal point from a breadcrumb. Were their counterparts any better, say, 30 years ago? It seems unlikely. There are thousands of adults who, while they would be ashamed of illiteracy, wil cheerfully admit to innumeracy. Attempts to correlate maths performance with teaching methods have failed to fix the blame firmly on either old or new-style maths. Though *Black Paper* contributors may labour mightily, we shall never know whether maths standards have declined, and it wouldn't take us much further if we did. What we do know is that many children are failing to reach the standards required in 1977 – and that should be enough.

Maths provides a perfect example of how the cumbersome machinery of the 16-plus examination system fails to guarantee standards. The examinations are moderately efficient in identifying the elite who will continue with full-time education; but, even at CSE level, they fail to pinpoint the essential skills and knowledge for those who will leave school.

Essex employers who sat on working parties with county teachers last year claimed that CSE gradings were a reliable guide to suitability for industrial training only for the top quarter of successful candidates. For the majority of school leavers, said the working parties' report, 'industry lacks guidance in interpreting the level of attainment of pupils and equating it to external and internal examination results'. Secondary schools are not ignoring basic skills but, in an expanded curriculum (probably fitted into slightly fewer timetable slots than in the past), they are giving less time to them. It's quite possible that some children are better at basic arithmetic at 11 or 12 than they are at 16, simply because they get inadequate practice in the meantime.

An overblown syllabus may mean that even the brighter children are rushing through mathematical concepts without understanding them properly. Some concepts probably present children with greater difficulty and require more reinforcement than has been generally thought. A study at Brunel University's Department of Education has discovered a 'common core' of mathematical difficulties – it includes, for example, calculating the area and circumference of a circle.

The core was first discovered in a test of craft and technician students. The striking thing was that, when the students' teachers were asked to assess the difficulties that each test question would present, they greatly underestimated the difficulty of the common core items. Even more striking, when the test was applied to first-year university students, trainee teachers and school O level candidates, it emerged that each group had special difficulty with almost exactly the same items. Proportion, another item in the Brunel core, also emerges as a special problem in the Concepts in Secondary Mathematics and Science project at Chelsea College. When third-form children in secondary schools were given a recipe which stated that eight people needed half-a-pint of cream and asked how much would be required if only six people were coming to dinner, less than 25 per cent got the answer. Calculations of that sort are essential for 16-year-olds entering the engineering industry. Teaching them seems to require more care and thought than they have had in the past.

But good maths teaching depends on skilled and enthusiastic maths teachers. In the primary schools, where children first encounter the subject, a bare majority of the teachers are likely to have even an O level maths pass. According to the Brunel study, a quarter of primary teacher trainees actively dislike maths and another third can only tolerate it. The Inner London Education Authority wants all its primary schools to have a specialist who can co-ordinate maths teaching – at present, only one school in three has such an animal. The staffing in secondary schools is equally unsatis-

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factory. Two years ago a survey by government inspectors revealed that nearly one-third of secondary school maths teaching was done by people who lacked 'acceptable qualifications'. Many of these non-specialists are primarily committed to another curriculum area and just teach maths (perhaps reluctantly) to fill up their time-tables. The teacher unemployment crisis will not solve the problem; on the contrary, by freezing teacher recruitment, education authorities are ensuring that the shortage of specialist mathematicians is built in to the schools for generations.

Training colleges, better at explaining the mysteries of Piagetian child psychology than at showing how you actually knock fractions into the heads of a class of bored 11-year-olds, are now upgrading their courses to degree status. That means higher academic standards which, in turn, frequently means lower standards of professional and practical competence. A report last year by a Royal Society sub-committee states: 'Partially-digested courses on branches of mathematics beyond a student's capacity and interest only make him think that misunderstanding is the norm in maths learning. He then passes this view of maths on in his own classroom.' And the report adds that the belief that high standards can only be achieved in 'academic', and not in 'professional', courses has led many colleges to diminish both the time and the status accorded to the mechanics of teaching subjects such as maths.

A knowledge of industrial maths would be more helpful to most teachers than academic maths. Most secondary maths teachers have never heard of milling, shaping, turning, grinding and jib-boring, much less what maths are required for them. An obvious example of how schools need to keep in touch with industry is over metrication. Many schools have embraced metrication with enthusiasm (understandably, since the Government said we were all going to be metric by 1975) without realising that Imperial units would remain in use in the engineering industry for many years to come. Encouragingly, teachers and employers are now getting together to discuss such problems instead of continually whining about and sniping at each other's shortcomings.

The pressure for a national common core is probably greater in maths than in any other area of the curriculum. After all, almost anybody could draw up a list of essential skills, starting with addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. The Institute of Mathematics and its Applications has already published a list which could be taken or retaken at any age like the driving test, with a pass score of 95 per cent. But it's easy enough to draw up a list of maths processes that children should master, less easy to ensure that the children know how to use them. The trouble isn't always that children don't know how to divide; it's often that they don't know when to divide. Maths problems aren't confined to maths lessons; they crop up in science, craft, even, in this statistics-conscious age, in history and social studies. Perhaps 'numeracy across the curriculum' should be a slogan alongside Bullock's 'literacy across the curriculum'.

Caroline Seebohm

After the Ball

The big news of the year so far is that the 1977 *Social Register* has changed its format. Instead of a lot of small books devoted to the individual cities across the country which boast a social register (including New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Chicago, Baltimore and Washington), there is now one large volume – and a whole new needlepoint challenge for the subscribing ladies who love to cover it in dainty embroidery.

The *Social Register* is the *Who's Who* of American class – a list of people whose background and social standing are elevated enough to be included. In its own words, 'The *Social Register* records the full names and addresses of members of prominent families . . . ' It also lists your university, clubs, and other essential information such as 'Myf.' – an abbreviation for *Mayflower* Descendants, and 'Rv.' – Sons of the Revolution. Your wife's name is included, with all her previous surnames if divorced, so you can tell what time round it is. It lists 'Dilatory Domiciles' for most recent changes, and 'Married Maidens' for those who can't remember a person's married name.

The first *Social Register* appeared in 1877, and people connect it with the original '400' – the 400 most socially distinguished families in America, so chosen when Mrs William Astor planned a ball in New York in 1892 and found that only 400 people could fit comfortably into her ballroom. Today, the *SR* lists many more than 400 families. There are some people who would sell their souls to get into it; there are others who ask to be struck off out of scorn at its existence; still others are excluded or struck off by the social dictators who run the *Register* for being socially undesirable, for instance for marrying beneath them or being pushy rich Jews. Crimes against the American people do not, apparently, merit a strike-out: Nixon's name is boldly listed in the new, improved 1977 *Register*. Carter's name is not included – yet; but the reason for that may be that Plains, Georgia, never had a social register in the first place.

In short, the *Social Register* appeals to about the same number of Americans as the *Police Gazette*; but include in that number Malcolm Forbes, dashing entrepreneur/balloonist, owner of the successful *Forbes* magazine. Last year Forbes bought the *Register*, hence its new look. 'We intend to stay in the background,' a tight-lipped *Forbes* spokesman told me. Old *Social Register* hands are disappointed by his changes. 'It's such a bore going through 15 Stewarts who come from California and Ohio when you're just interested in the one who lives round the corner,' complained a Philadelphia user. The new price is also unwelcome – $28 for the winter edition, $35 for summer and winter combined. (But of course there's a summer edition – most subscribers have summer residences, naturally.) There is also a general feeling of unease at the change. Might it not even signify yet another crumbling of the barricades?

This insecurity is not unjustified. One of the most exclusive events of the American upper class social scene – the Philadelphia Assembly – has just had its most traumatic season since it started in 1748. The Philadelphia Assemblies (the word is used in its 18th-century sense) were grand balls held twice a year, with guests culled from the *gratin* of Philadelphia colonial society. Today, there is only one ball a year, but the rules remain impregnable. There is a self-perpetuating committee to plan the ball, and a receiving line consisting of the Social Bride of the Year, and Mother of the Debuntante of the Year, plus other suitable ladies, before whom all guests must bow or curtsy on arrival. White gloves for both sexes and formal clothes are *de rigueur*; until about 12 years ago no divorced person could attend.

You subscribe to the Assembly by paying $5 a year – a small sum for a princely privilege. The difficulties attached to becoming a subscriber are legion. You must write a letter stating your background, family lineage and position, to a subscriber or 'manager', who will then propose you – maybe. In a 1916 book about these occasions, the author mentions two Jews as being subscribers. Today, a former manager told me, getting a Jew in would be practically impossible. 'Well, let's say it would be sticky,' he amended. The *Social Register* is a shoe-in by comparison.

Since 1904 this ball has been held at the Bellevue Stratford Hotel in Philadelphia, a splendid pile with an enormous ballroom surrounded by galleries, and venue for the most prominent parties Philadelphia could muster. One well-bred survivor recalls a dance on the Bellevue roof, 'complete with white fences, straw-strewn paddocks, murals of hunting country, and waiters in "pink" coats and white cotton gloves . . .'

It is also at the Bellevue that the American Legion is accustomed to hold its annual convention. Last year fate dealt a deadly hand. The convention was decimated by the mysterious 'legionnaires' disease' that killed 29 people and affected about 150 more. So dire was the sickness that suddenly nobody wanted to stay at the Bellevue any more. So the hotel was closed down for good, and the Assembly sadly shunted off to the inferior Sheraton, where 'it went very well,' a supporter said firmly. To add insult to injury, Meyer Davis, the socialite bandleader who had played at Inaugural balls for every American President from Harding to Nixon, and at every Philadelphia Assembly since anyone could remember, died at the age of 83. His son, who looks just like him, manfully took up the baton at this year's Assembly – but all those slow-slow-quick-quick-slow Philadelphia feet knew it was not the same.

Will it ever be the same again? The prognosis looks doubtful, what with a new President in the White House who not only declares that he favours wearing jeans, but sends out inaugural party invitations that say 'Black Tie Optional'. But the final blow may well be the change in club admission rules of Philadelphia's exclusive Union League: this year they are going to accept Democrats.

New York

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London Diary

☐ Christopher Hitchens spoke for me in last week's Diary; I don't want to see Enoch Powell prosecuted for making those speeches, either now or when the new (and on principle highly questionable) law comes into effect. Indeed, my current nightmare is a vision of Powell being carried shoulder-high from the Old Bailey after a triumphant acquittal. That any jury would acquit, or at least fail to agree, I have no doubt, since 12 average citizens would include three who share Powell's opinions. A highly credible jury-room scene was enacted the other week in a BBC play by Fay Weldon, part of a programme on rape. The play was ostensibly about rape, the motions it arouses, moral prejudice and male chauvinism, but at the same time it was a play about the jury system. Anyone who imagines that juries apply the law regardless of their sympathies and antipathies must be extremely naïve. A friend who was on a jury trying a dangerous-driving case recalls little dissent when the foreman said: 'Well, he may have broken the law but do we want to drive the poor chap off the road? I mean, we're all motorists, aren't we?'

☐ So I don't want Powell tried, nor do I favour banning the National Front or preventing it from holding meetings. What could be prevented without any outrage on libertarian principles, however, is the success of the NF's plan to get a large chunk of party political broadcasts in the next general election campaign by fielding 318 candidates. Since few, if any, of these candidates will be serious contenders, the motive is obvious and the scheme amounts to buying screen time on the American model, just what British TV is supposed not to allow. (It would be fascinating to know where the money is coming from.) The system which relates the screen time to the number of candidates is pretty silly anyway, for we all know that the number of Liberal candidates, for instance, depends mainly on Liberal finances at the time when the election is called. A fairer system would be to relate the screen time to the votes polled by each party at the previous election. It ought to be possible, even if we expect an election this year, to get the rules changed. The purpose of the change would be to dish the NF, true; but Labour ministers, and indeed Tories, needn't pretend to be neutral about racism. When I was in Bradford some months ago it was made clear to me that the NF's *Open Door* programme – featuring tendentious shots of streets in the part of Bradford populated by Asians – had done a lot to inflame prejudice there. I defend the principle of *Open Door*; a whole series of NF programmes at election time is something else again. As a matter of fact most people wouldn't mind if we scrapped the whole business of allotted party political broadcasts and allowed the BBC and ITV to cover the election as news and features, but I don't expect either Transport House or Conservative Office to agree to that.

☐ All writers have a collection of incidents which occurred in real life but are too improbable to be used in fiction. Here is one, from London 1976. Jane (I know her well but of course this isn't her name) gave an admirer lunch at her home and he passionately urged her to marry him. She said she wasn't sure about it, and they decided to go for a walk. When Jane opened the door, her dog dashed out in the path of a speeding Post Office van. Her lover rushed to save the dog, was knocked down, and was taken to hospital with concussion. After a few days, Jane brought him to her house and nursed him. He was grateful, but suffering from amnesia. He did recall meeting her before but had no memory of asking for her hand. Jane, who is of good English family, didn't feel that she could say anything about it. Eventually, expressing his courteous thanks, the gentleman departed.

☐ Without much help from the British Waterways Board, a bureaucratic and unimaginative outfit, more and more people are spending their leisure time enjoyably on the canals. They relish the peacefulness and like to imagine themselves in an England free of juggernaut lorries. Now the Board has decided that it will refuse in future to license boats towed by horses – obviously the quintessence of the canal dream. It claims that horses damage the towpath; but this doesn't seem to have been a problem when the horses were far more numerous, and they damage it far less than powered boats damage the banks. Another argument is that horses disturb walkers and anglers, though I don't suppose they have been asked whether they mind. The Board concludes: 'For us to allow a very small number of people to cause such inconvenience to the great majority, who support the canals through their taxes, would be quite indefensible for a public authority.' A really good example of a small number of people causing inconvenience to the great majority would be a horse-drawn coach going through London escorted by cavalry, but of course that's different. You may not believe it, but the same Board which proposes to ban horses also employs men to patrol the towpath of the Regent's Canal, extremely popular with strollers, on heavy motor-bikes which they ride at 20 miles an hour. Once, having leaped out of the way, I stopped one of these men and said that I thought the path was for walkers. Bellowing over the sound of his engine, he demanded: 'Want to get mugged?'

☐ W. N. ('Trilby') Ewer, who has died at the age of 91, established a record of continuity that must be close to unique in journalism; he was the *Daily Herald*'s principal foreign affairs man from 1912 to 1964. The only break in this long service came in the first world war, when he was a conscientious objector and was assigned – whether by chance or by some sardonic official – to farm work on the Astor estate at Cliveden. Ewer was a man of immense knowledge, high professional skill, and also considerable culture. He published poetry and might have made his career in the literary world. Not many men have got into the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* in their lifetimes, but Ewer did, with two items. One of these was 'How odd/Of God/To choose/the Jews.' In the days when Auschwitz was an ordinary town in Silesia, I suppose this witticism didn't count as bad taste. Ewer's other entry is more noble. In a poem dedicated to the dead of the trenches, he wrote the lines:

I gave my life for freedom; this I know
For those who bade me fight had told me so.

Oh, why was he called Trilby? Because, when invited to country-house weekends, he went about barefoot like Trilby in the novel.

☐ A friend has arrived from Warsaw with the current Polish joke. One of the things I like about these jokes is the retention of the classical form, as in: 'There was an Englishman, a Scotchman and an Irishman . . .' Well then: a German comes home and finds his wife in bed with another man. He goes into the other room and phones his lawyer. A Frenchman comes home, etc. He goes into the other room and phones his mistress. An Englishmen comes home, etc. He sits down and reads *The Times*. A Pole comes home, etc. He shouts: 'Woman, don't waste time like this! Don't you know there's sugar in the shops?'

☐ I know a lot of these jokes, including one which I recognised as a joke only after supposing for several minutes that I was being given an account of the successful sectors of the Polish economy. Deep in the provinces, I was told, there is a factory where the workers apply themselves with unflagging energy and enthusiasm, the quality of the products is maintained with pride, output is constantly increasing, and no one ever objects to working overtime. This is the People's National Joke Factory.

Mervyn Jones

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ The paintings, jewellery and petrified figures of a woman and a dog have attracted enormous interest. Children like to stand against the column of volcanic ash and work out exactly the hour when they might have perished, depending on their height. – Article in the *Daily Telegraph* on the Pompeii exhibition (M. Kent)

☐ Of Sexton, McCreadie says: 'Most coaches tend to repeat themselves and take ideas from each other, but David has a tremendous capacity to think things out for himself. I like to think I am the same in that respect . . . I don't think I have used any of Dave's ideas since I became manager.' – *Sunday Times* (Eric Grinwald)

☐ Sir Lionel Thompson, defending, told Acton magistrates: 'These are very mild publications and there is nothing which by present standards could be called indecent. Surely we are all used to seeing a woman's posterior. These things are always being thrown at us.' – *Ealing Gazette* (F. Whelan)

☐ Large Golden Labrador. Eats anything. Especially fond of children. – *Dyfed's Own Advertiser* (Mrs K. Davies)

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University Forum

Jay Andrews*

The Road to Brook Street

One upon a time in the 1760s, the Turks pointed a cannon out to sea and called it the Oczacov. It required a regiment to prime and load it, and when fired emitted a highly satisfactory roar and thick clouds of smoke. It enjoyed a reputation which inspired no little awe and great respect, but it had one small draw-back: the cannonball so enthusiastically launched covered very few yards before dropping into the sea, while its target, the Russian fleet, drifted happily over the horizon.

Bitter and twisted minds should herein recognise the Oxbridge system, with themselves as the ineffective missile. For three years a monstrous regiment of academics and domestics primes you for the (glittering) prizes, tamps you down with the tripos, and launches you forth with all the assurance an establishment so massive can offer. But even as you plummet sadly into comparative mediocrity, another cannonball is loaded into the Oczacov, and another thousand candidates, nurtured on post-Raphaelite fantasy, cry for the glistering spires.

The problem is that graduates are finding it difficult to get suitable jobs, by which I mean jobs which do not make redundant the three years and one grant spent at university. Oxbridge graduates particularly were cushioned, if not exempt, from previous economic shocks because employers believed in the myth of their superior quality. Like most myths this had some factual basis, in this case a further system of selection and the academic quality made possible by traditional and financial privilege. But the foundation has been eroded by economic pressures and the decentralisation of academic talent – exacerbated however temporarily by fashionable prejudice against the infamous Oxbridge arrogance, exercised by all but the City and those committees selecting parliamentary candidates.

So Oxbridge graduates now have to face a situation not previously envisaged in any *Sinister Street* or *Brideshead Revisited*. They have come, if somewhat tardily, to the same doubts which face any student who sees the heads of private and public industry endorsing an advertisement which declares three years in the army to be as good, if not better, preparation for managerial appointments as three years at university. And to the same misgivings which Professor Igor Alexander recently pondered for the *Sunday Times*, when he asked readers if he was merely producing engineering graduates for the dole if an advertisement in the same newspaper could baldly state, 'we don't want the academically highly qualified engineer'.

Those graduates who are not perturbed have not read a newspaper recently, are well provided for, or have merely opted voluntarily for jobs not requiring degrees. One graduate of my acquaintance developed his talent for writing marketable nonsense, *à la* Cleese, at university. Rather than take a job in which he might lose sight of his original intent and waste his peculiar talent, he prefers the unorthodox and questionable employment which allows him to write, and I can't mean the BBC. Another graduate who took the dubious advice of a Careers Advisory Board and became a secretary, 'so you can work your way into publishing, my dear', is now employed by a commercial managing director, her undoubted organisational talent earning her the money and credit which could keep her from all but a vicarious enjoyment of success. Both have jobs not needing degrees, both conscious of a certain waste.

'The trouble is, nowadays, these students don't want to work' is a common moan. Once qualified, it comes nearer the truth as 'most students don't want to work at a job to which their university training is irrelevant'. The immediate implications of the present economic decline have sent today's undergraduates scurrying to the Oxbridge Careers Advisory Boards. A few might ignore the crisis, complacently remembering the ease with which they scaled the Parnassian heights of student journalism, drama and politics, expecting the world at their feet the moment they doff their mortarboards. A few, but not necessarily the same few, may achieve that position. But the rest, viewing with alarm the decrease in the number of jobs in the orthodox Oxbridge careers of civil service and teaching, have inundated the CABs with requests for interviews and advice. Some know what they want, and use the CABs as a means of procuring the relevant application forms. Others, whose knowledge of their future is determined only by the rudimentary elimination of those careers for which they are neither qualified nor suited, look to the CABs for inspiration. Some increase their difficulties, certainly, by ignoring those careers which they feel might destroy their idealistic integrity, but most are prepared to compromise and merely seek a job with chances of promotion and good pay.

The collapse of privilege, whether it means that young Adam considers his chance of employment and success no greater than a redbrick graduate, or that graduates should expect no greater concessions from employers than those without degrees, is necessary, even welcome; but it answers no problems. The Turks eventually replaced the Oczacov, but the analogue reform of the university system will not be as easy for any of her Majesty's possible governments. To tailor universities to contemporary ideology or prognoses is as dire as to require them to provide vocational training, and the two often ominously coincide. The galvanic action taken by the US government to encourage budding Von Brauns to compete with Russia's space programme left them with some highly qualified unemployed after the NASA cuts. The precise estimate of situations ten or 20 years ahead is an ideal, but anything less accurate leaves not only thousands of graduates affected, but the educational bodies concerned with a costly and redundant programme, the adaptation of which is a cumbersome manoeuvre, even at the agile heights of higher education.

The ideas that follow are neither new nor original, nor do they solve the problem of graduate unempolyment. They would merely discourage the waste of time and money spent at university, not all of which is inevitable. Given that a significant number of graduates do not use their three years training any more, perhaps less, than they would experience gained in three years employment; given that those who get jobs through vocational training independent of their degrees fall into the same category; given that a large percentage of firms which stipulate a degree as a qualification for employment only need the intelligence that should accompany it, a degree being for them a convenient measure, but expensive for both the government and those whose circumstances or preference disqualified them from this particular test of intelligence: given these factors, university education should not be seen as the necessary consequence to the sixth form. Schools and universities should not discourage the idea of university, rather encourage alternative plans: about which both are unwilling because high university placement is a source of income to one, reputation to the other.

Which leads me to my next suggestion, with all its transatlantic inspiration. Undergraduates who have taken a year off before university to work have, on the whole, a better appreciation of their intentions and therefore greater application. A postponement of university entrance and a more relaxed time scheme for the course itself would allow prospective students to broaden their knowledge of employment and their own potential, with the possibility of earning money to relieve the financial responsibilities of government and parent. The availability of the jobs might be limited by their temporary nature, but the concept of social service organisations manned by those not immediately absorbed, with upkeep provided by the state and wages credited to their university accounts, is not impracticable. The part payment of grants by students, through organised or individually chosen jobs, and the decision of some to forgo university entirely, would release funds for direct or indirect creation of jobs and relieve the overcrowded universities.

The best answer may not lie in such a plan but the problem of graduate unemployment or misemployment will not resolve itself or be resolved by tailoring universities to economic forecast. The Turks were not so stupid as to expect the Russian ships to sail obligingly close to the gun, but they installed a new one only when the impressive rumblings of the Oczacov had destroyed, not only the gun, but the wall on which it stood.

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First Person

Arthur Marshall

No Laughing Aloud

The father-son relationship, never an easy business at the best of times, is not helped when the elder of the two is a well-intentioned but boring gas-bag, given to sounding off in a somewhat self-righteous manner on the widest possible variety of subjects. I am referring, of course, to the 18th-century Earl of Chesterfield and it is true that in the relationship under review the son in question was at first a godson and the godfathers of those days doubtless took their spiritual duties very seriously. Later on the boy became an adopted and much loved son but it seems to me unforgivable to off-load such a daunting pile of verbiage into somebody not your own flesh and blood and who therefore has done nothing, so to speak, to deserve it. One is further appalled to find that the son, Master Philip Stanhope, a child resident 'at Mr Roberts' boarding house in Marybone', was aged six when the torrent of advice and maxims first descended, in letter form, upon him.

From then on the missives poured in, outlining rules of conversation and droning away about scandal, parsons, diligence ('Idleness is only the refuge of weak minds') knowledge, women (very poorly rated), with impertinent criticisms of Shakespeare thrown in. Even when Philip advanced in years and passed on to Dr Dodd's scholastic establishment near Twickenham, on flowed the pen of this poor man's La Rochefoucauld and who indeed sometimes wrote in French and included lists of handy words and phrases (*de mal en pis*: from bad to worse) to be mastered. There was no escape.

And the result of all this? One is delighted to report that, for all his lordship's high hopes of high office for him in the future, the boy, though kind and gentle, turned out to be nothing but an amiable and commonplace nonentity. Of heavy build, he enjoyed French cooking and was a careful keeper of weather records (he knew, heaven knows, all about wind), emptying the rain-gauge daily and noting down the precipitations in a large book. So much for good advice to the young. It is odd that one of Lord Chesterfield's statements still has the power, even after 200 years, to make one bristle with rage. 'In my mind there is nothing so ill-bred as audible laughter.'

What sort of discouraging twaddle was that to feed to a healthy boy of nine? At that age he should have been loudly splitting his sides every minute of the day. But possibly this was, and maybe still is, a widely held upper-crust view of laughter. Perhaps Lord Grade could smuggle a decibel-counter into the House of Lords and watch the needle's wobbles, if any. I have certainly heard Lady Diana Cooper state that she had never in her life reacted physically to anything she found funny but I dare say that famous beauties have always found it wiser not to go in for any facial activities that in any way might stretch or disturb or unseat the peaches and cream. It may be too that Goldsmith's warning that loud laughs speak a vacant mind froze people's cackles in their throats, though this rubbishy view is disproved by many distinguished laughers, among them Maurice Bowra, a man with a mind that could hardly be called vacant and whose reactions to anything, either grave or gay, produced thunderous volumes of sound.

Be all this as it may, in childhood and youth I was encouraged, on all suitable occasions, to laugh, and I was lucky enough to find myself surrounded by contemporaries as keen on laughter as I was. We actively sought it out, A fellow schoolboy called Williamson, aged 12, became convinced that, if only one knew where to look, the Bible could provide rib-ticklers galore, the Old Testament particularly. Despite constant discouragements he pored through book after book for guffaws, and certainly unearthed, in proverbs, a few things that were unusual. 'Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour.' Meant to be funny, we wondered? Who can now say? And what about 'As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman who is without discretion'? History is silent.

One Sunday, in the local church where the school attended divine service and during a missionary's sermon (it was, ahead of its time, concerned with 'being kind to Brother Fuzzy-Wuzzy'), I saw Williamson beginning to shake. He had been ferreting about in the Book of Common Prayer and, silently pointing, discreetly passed me his discovery. It was under the Table of Kindred and it said: 'A man may not marry his grandmother.' One of Williamson's grandmothers, a frequent visitor to the school, was a dear, grey-haired, roly-poly lady called Mrs Rumball. She used to arrive in a stately chauffeur-driven car and take us out to tea. The idea of Williamson being joined in unholy matrimony to Mrs Rumball ('I Humphrey, take thee, Clarice . . .') provided a delightful hilarity.

When in due course at school the frightful Latin lessons eased up and we could concentrate more on French and German, my heart leapt at the information that we were going to read some 'plays'. I knew what to expect from plays, having been taken by parents and jolly aunts during the hols to *Rookery Nook*, *Hay Fever* and *The Farmer's Wife*. Chuckles, one felt, were just around the corner. But nobody, alas, had warned me about the plays of Racine and Corneille. Racine and Corneille were very far from being funsters. If Racine and Corneille knew any jokes, they kept them to themselves. They really do not make suitable reading material for 15-year-olds who are ready for a lark. Their plays did, however, at least label themselves as being 'tragedies'.

I had not yet realised that anything that was positively tragic proclaimed itself to be a 'comedy', however unfunny. If actually funny, it called itself 'a light comedy' (Alfred Lunt, asked by an interviewer why each play in which he and Miss Fontanne so brilliantly appeared was always described as 'a light comedy', answered crisply 'Well, would *you* buy tickets for something that called itself "A heavy comedy"? No sir, you would not.'). And so, when our German master (alas, no scintillater) announced 'a comedy' by Lessing called *Minna von Barnhelm*, I was all attention, with a pleased smile at the ready. Barnhelm gets 0 out of 10 for merriment and charm. Bad cess to, if it actually exists, Barnhelm. If you are an RAF pilot and happen to have a bomb handy, pray go at once and drop it on Barnhelm. Flatten Barnhelm. And if Minna chances to be in Barnhelm at the time, so much the better.

Roger Woddis

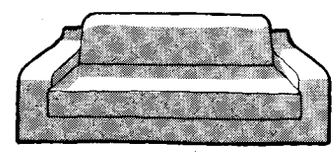
On Milton's Blindness

Milton Friedman has suggested that Britain's nationalised industries should be handed back to private ownership.

When I consider how your time is spent
Squatting in your goatskin tent,
Thinking deep thoughts, climbing the West face
Of Mount Sinai, humping those bloody slabs
Carved with Friedman's Law back to base,
I have to ask you – what precisely, Milt,
Is up for grabs?

Where shall we start? Maybe the NHS?
We could kill that off, I guess –
Make carcinoma pay – vending machines
In the mortuary – and then there's coal,
Unless some maddened miner intervenes.
Go for the gingerbread. Hammer the guilt
Of the begging-bowl.

Who needs iron and steel for the public good?
Chairmen are mostly made of wood.
None of them has your vision. Lead the way
Back to the jingling jungle we escaped from.
Unprofitable service has had its day:
An economically viable disposal squad
Could make a bomb.



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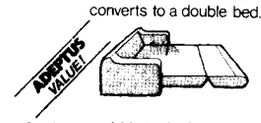

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Letters to the Editor

Britain's Last Colony

Sir, Raymond Fung (Letters 14 January) may well be right that wage-earners get a bad deal in Hong Kong, and that social reform is necessary. But there are too many doubtful assertions in his letter. He says that profits, unlike real wages, have risen substantially in recent years. But his figures do not support this (or the opposite, or any other) conclusion. The results which he quotes for Jardines, the Hong Kong Bank, and others, cover the whole of their international activities, many of which are outside Hong Kong. It may or may not be a good thing to make money from property in Australia or banking in Beirut, but it is nothing to do with the distribution of income in Hong Kong. He does not mention that other companies lost a great deal of money, particularly in textiles, in the last few years. You cannot get a fair view of the average increase in profits from one or two examples. And he should adjust profits for inflation, just as he quite rightly does to arrive at real wages.

As for wages, he uses rates not earnings. As we know from experience in this country, earnings often rise faster than rates, particularly in an upturn such as Hong Kong has been experiencing since the end of 1975. More serious, his figures cover only manufacturing industry – which includes less than 40 per cent of the working population. This sector – and construction – certainly suffered badly in the period of no growth. But other industries – distribution, tourism, finance – did much better; so it is not right to claim any firm conclusions about the behaviour of real wages from figures which leave these out. Lastly, he argues that too many people have to work in Hong Kong because wages are too low, and a worker cannot support his family alone. Wages may be too low, but his point that 1.9 million out of 4.3 million (or around 44 per cent) are economically active in Hong Kong does not support his argument. In the United Kingdom the percentage is around 46 per cent.

JEREMY HARDIE

131 Gloucester Avenue
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The Left in the Thirties

Sir, G. R. Strauss, one of the signatories to the Unity Manifesto in January 1937, accuses me of a 'serious error' in suggesting that the Unity Campaign was really about the affiliation of the Communist Party and perhaps the ILP as well to the Labour Party (Letters 21 January). He claims that 'neither Sir Stafford Cripps nor any other of the members of the Labour Party actively engaged in the campaign desired this and we frequently said so'.

Affiliation was not the only aim of the Unity Campaign but there is no doubt that it was politically the most significant one. Fenner Brockway, of the ILP, who negotiated the Unity Agreement in 1936 with, among others, Cripps (for the Socialist League) and Harry Pollitt (for the Communists) makes this quite clear in his account of the discussions in his memoirs *Inside the Left* (p. 266):

> The first problem was the form of organisational unity at which we should aim. There was no suggestion that the three sections should amalgamate; the idea was that the ILP and the Communist Party should, like the Socialist League, become affiliated to the Labour Party. The Communist Party wanted such affiliation without conditions but the ILP was not prepared to enter the Labour Party unless either its policy was changed or freedom were granted to advocate and carry out a revolutionary socialist programme. This problem was settled by a far-reaching concession which Maxton made. He said that if the Unity Campaign succeeded in convincing the Labour Party that it should open its doors to the CP and the ILP, he would regard this as evidence that its attitude had changed sufficiently to justify affiliation.

As far as the Communists were concerned, these negotiations were closely linked to their own major political drive for affiliation which had been going on for about a year. There was no secret about this, and the Communists had received a lot of support from within the Labour Party. A pro-affiliation resolution at the Edinburgh Labour Party Conference in October 1936 was backed by nearly 600,000 votes, including those of a large number of constituency parties and of the Socialist League, whose chairman had until recently been Stafford Cripps, and which was heavily dependent on Cripps for cash.

Aneurin Bevan, like Strauss and Cripps a signatory to the Unity Manifesto, summed up the opinion of many on the Labour Left when he said that Communist affiliation 'would lead to the spiritual re-awakening of the British working-class movement' (quoted in the *Daily Herald* 5 August 1936).

BEN PIMLOTT

The Two Queens
Cambo, Morpeth
Northumberland

Cant about Kent

Sir, I was last moved to write to the press about this university three years ago when a right-wing newspaper alleged that we had 'mob rule'. I must now protest about the equally unpleasant misrepresentation by Mr Berlyn ('Kent's Stunted Growth', NS 21 January). Poor Mr Berlyn! Clearly he is a disgruntled man and did not enjoy his year with us. Not all of his statements are entirely false, mind you – Kent, like most places, has its failings and virtues – but few are wholly true. His article differs little from the kind of generalised smear which might be composed – with equal unfairness – about almost any university in the country. It doesn't help Kent, of course (it wasn't meant to!). But it doesn't reflect much credit on the NS either.

K. G. KNIGHT

Keynes College
The University
Canterbury, Kent

Sir, I feel bound to take issue with Simon Berlyn, (an erstwhile contributor to Kent University's *Incant*), on his article. He describes the university's 'desolate' surroundings. On the contrary, the Kent campus looks less drab and concrete than other contemporary universities. The buildings are well spaced; Canterbury and its cathedral are nearly always in view; it is immediately surrounded by woods and beautiful countryside. These were some of the reasons why I applied to Kent as a first choice. Another was that it seemed a cut above the other universities of the Sixties, which I preferred in any case to the redbrick generation. He criticises the collegiate system – many are attracted here by it – but would a large building feeding 3,500 students and staff be such an attractive proposition, especially when it has to be reached in all weathers? What particularly surprised me was Mr Berlyn's apparent preference for 'softer materials' and 'incorporated landscaping' before such comparative essentials as a wash basin in one's room. Keynes (Mr Berlyn's 'best college') is the only one without this facility. It was built on a restricted budget, and hence the communal ablutions. In vacations students all move to Keynes College, while conferences visitors use the others. Mr Berlyn criticises the increase in student numbers which, he claims, has caused a deterioration in academic standards, yet in my experience the degree of individual attention afforded students by the academic staff is considerable.

Finally, he paints a picture of a deserted campus after the droves of students depart for Herne Bay at dusk. Didn't he ever see a packed bar in the colleges? Or go to a concert? Ironically, Mr Berlyn obtained his B.A. at Leicester, a university where five out of the seven halls of residence are a two-mile bus ride from the main university, unlike Kent, where a lecture might easily be only a couple of minutes away inside one's own college.

KATHERINE GRAY
Editor

Incant
The University
Canterbury, Kent

Who's Patronising Now?

Sir, Christopher Hitchens, writing about Enoch Powell and inflamatory utterances (London Diary, 28 January), reminds us that the anti-Market MP John Ryman once called Helmut Schmidt a 'patronising Hun'. This in turn reminds me of your profile of Roy Jenkins a few weeks ago ('The First Gentleman of Europe', NS 7 January), in which the safely anonymous author, while oozing historical analogies, tells us of Schmidt's 'absurd arrogance', talks of the need to enlist the help of the French to clobber the Germans (all in the name of supra-nationalism, natch), and raises the moral tone to unparalleled heights by suggesting that the First Gentleman would be well advised to play 'the hand of fear, of the threat of the collapse of democracy, the emergent red peril and so on' as a tactic for suppressing the manifest evil of Euro-nationalism.

How civilised these Europeanists are! How nice to know that such gentlemanly political discussion is welcome in the NEW STATESMAN, while the crudities of the Member for Blyth (not to mention those of the Member for South Down) are so rightly shunned.

CHRIS JONES

47 Blomfield Road
London W9

Democracy and Shirley Williams

Sir, Right and Left, they all try to kidnap George Orwell these days. Mr James Fenton is what my mother would have called a clevershins. By praying in aid the admirable *Homage to Catalonia*, he suggests that Orwell was a Trotskyist of his own stripe – unlike Mrs Shirley Williams.

He should take time off to read the four Penguin volumes of Orwell's letters and journalism. He will find the socialism that Orwell adhered to refined and redefined as the years pass. He will find at the end, in a letter to his publisher denying that *1984* was an attack on socialism, Orwell's final affirmation both that he was still a democratic socialist and that he was and would continue to be a member of the Labour Party – Mrs Williams's Labour Party, surely, rather than Mr Fenton's.

DONALD TYERMAN

London NW6

Corvo and Friend

Sir, If his opinion were fixed by reading *Frederick Rolfe: Baron Corvo*, then one point made by V. S. Pritchett (NS 28 January) should be amended. Although few, Rolfe did have friends. It has to be stated in his favour that he was also loyal to those few. One of them

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was Henry Harland, whom he admired and with whom he never wished to quarrel. One did arise, one which is recorded in *Nicholas Crabbe*. On 1 April 1901 Rolfe wrote to John Lane about 'Harland's libellous statements' on *In His Own Image* and in a letter of 4 June 1901 he said that he had 'not seen H. Harland during 18 months', placing the date of the ensuing quarrel about the first month of 1900. From these, Miss Benkovitz has deduced that 'Rolfe never forgave Harland' (p. 122). But Rolfe did: he was never a permanent enemy to Harland. Privately Rolfe had not lost his continuing adoration for the popular novelist and one-time editor of *The Yellow Book* who bought the first Toto series. On one page in his commonplace book, he wrote:

Henrice Harland Trevor Haddon
Scriptori Artifici
vererabunde
cogitabunde
ddd

He could not have linked these two names until after March 1901. But how did Rolfe reveal that he had forgiven Harland publicly? This can be read from two reviews of Harland's books appearing in *The Outlook*. *The Cardinal's Snuff-box* contained, Rolfe said, Harland's 'rare qualities of charm and poetry and observation'. He ended his review, 'Oh, decidedly, dear Mr Harland, you must make haste to give us another of the same. Meanwhile your critic goes to his bookcase to fish out his copy of *Grey Roses*.' This was printed on 26 May 1900. The second one was for *The Lady Paramount* and came out on 10 May 1902. 'The conception, the style, the colour, the brightness and the kindliness of spirit seem to us perfect in their way.' These words by Rolfe concluded with: 'Mr Harland's Muse, that paramount lady, is a Benevolent Despot.' How then can it be categorically said that 'Rolfe never forgave Harland'?

DONALD WEEKS
106a Shepherdess Walk
London N1

Poor Old Gowers

Sir, It is not uncommon for local government politicians to be criticised. I wonder how often the scorn should be directed instead at the officials. This is a quotation from a report of the director of administration and the county treasurer of Nottinghamshire County Council to the Resources Committee:

> In accordance with this requirement the Area Child Health staff have occupied accommodation in the Office Block Extension at County Hall, and Members will know that we have been hoping to secure their finding alternative accommodation in order that we can bring together at County Hall the County Council departments who are at the moment split over a number of locations, in particular it is desired to bring to County Hall Further Education Staff, Management Services Staff and Architects Staff who are currently housed elsewhere than at County Hall, and the Committee have approved a general plan of relocation of County departments which was really commenced by the move of the Planning and Transportation and Leisure Services departments into Trent Bridge House, and the removal of the Social Services department from Sovereign House into the Office Block Extension.

Why should the ratepayers of Notts. pay £30,000 a year for this demonstration of illiteracy?

OLIVER LEVER
Blackacre
Park Road
Plumtree, Nottingham

Oxford's 19th-century Ghost

Sir, It is always entertaining when a newspaper or magazine devotes a full page to an article declaring a particular person or institution to be irrelevant. Tim Bick's article (NS 28 January) on the Oxford Union was a model in this respect.

Perhaps I can touch on a couple of points concerning the Union Society. First, students support remains as strong as ever, with the first two debates of this term attracting over 500 people on both occasions. At the first, Tariq Ali and others persuaded the House to reject a motion 'That capitalism will triumph'. Not perhaps a motion that would be tossed out by the Tory-controlled students union executive! Secondly, on finance, the appeal continues and we are confident that sufficient sums will be raised to satisfy our creditors, and to ensure that financial stability may again match the numerical support which the Society enjoys.

In general terms, it seems pretty futile to argue about the relative merits of the Union Society and the Students Union when they have such distinct purposes. One is for debates and libraries, the other is concerned with specific student needs. The relationship between the two is healthy and friendly, and infinitely preferable to the students' union monopoly proposed by Mr Bick. I quite agree that Oxford needs more mixed colleges, but to use the Union as a scapegoat for that problem is just weak thinking. It would be a clever man who designed a structure less suited for Mr Bick's purposes than the Union Society building.

MICHAEL SOOLE
Chairman
Charitable Endowments Committee
The Union Society
Oxford

James *v.* Longford

Sir, It seemed ironical that Clive James should see fit to indulge in character assassination in his review of Lord Longford's book on Kennedy (NS 21 January). The old Earl has mildly proved in his reply (NS 28 January) that he is far from being a fool, and has made Mr James look rather silly. Your readers deserve a more serious appraisal of the work in question, which is in many ways a useful contribution to American studies, and far less prejudiced than your reviewer himself.

WALTER ROBERTS
95a Philbeach Gardens
London SW5

Wrong Wicket

Sir, Those who wondered about Julian Barnes's reference to *Cricket and Company* in last week's piece, 'Comic Cuts', may be trying to order it for their children from their newsagents. If newsagents are unhelpful, parents would do well to write not to the North Oxford of Mr Barnes's middle-class imagination but to *Cricket Magazine*, Walnut Lane, Boulder, Colorado, USA.

ANN THWAITE
Contributing Editor, UK
Cricket Magazine
The Mill House
Low Tharston
Norwich

Tell Me Another

Sir, I know about birds of a feather, but I couldn't gulp down Neil Kinnock's claim that Dennis Skinner is 'not a romantic'. The latter said (*Hansard*, 17 January, col. 48): 'Hon. Members should understand that people outside, whom they represent, rarely have the ability to down tools and pack in.'

Eh?

W. S. BROWNLIE
19 Hunterhill Road
Paisley

About Oxford books

Eleanor Marx

The fascinating three-part BBC television series was based on an Oxford book: **The Life of Eleanor Marx 1855-1898: A Socialist Tragedy**, by Chushichi Tsuzuki. Published in 1967, it was the first full biography of Marx's daughter, who played so important a part in the introduction of Marxian socialism and internationalism into Britain, and it was widely acclaimed. 'Scholarly, extremely well-documented, providing much new information, and contriving, since it is written at a great distance, to place Eleanor in full perspective,' wrote Asa Briggs in *The Listener*. In *The Guardian*, Lena Jeger said: 'This valuable book combines the story of her passions and devotions and friendships with an account of an eager society, arguing endlessly and often mistakenly about the translation into political organisation in many lands of her giant father's thoughts and ideas. Perhaps her personal destruction was inevitable, but her contribution to the ferment of Socialist ideas in the years before the cement had set is of enduring interest.' **Eleanor Marx**, by Chushichi Tsuzuki, remains available at £2.50.

Mary Wollstonecraft

Exactly one hundred years before Eleanor Marx's death, Mary Wollstonecraft published **The Wrongs of Woman.** Mary Wollstonecraft's short, eventful, dramatic life has tended to overshadow her writing, but it was her powerful and orginal imagination, shaping her experience and hard-won knowledge into the ardent radical philosophy which lay behind all her work, which gives it permanent value. Both **The Wrongs of Woman** and **Mary, A Fiction**, published ten year earlier, are autobiographical, and they brought a new seriousness to popular fiction. Long unavailable, the two books have just been published in Oxford English Novels, and are edited and introduced by Garry Kelly. £5.75.

Pre-industrial England

Two centuries ago the Industrial Revolution began the process of transforming Britain into the economic world we know today. But what sort of an economy was the England of the preceding centuries? **The Economy of England 1450-1750**, £3.75, paperback £1.75, looks at three centuries of English economic life stretching from the Wars of the Roses almost to the accession of George III. Professor D.C. Coleman looks through two different pairs of eyes: those of the historian and those of the economist or social scientist, and he presents the economy of England during a crucial period in its social and political context and in its changing relationship with Europe and the wider world.

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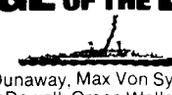

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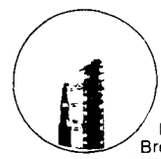

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Lew Grade

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Derek Mahon

All You Need Is Love

Poems of Cecil Day Lewis 1925-1972 chosen and with an introduction by Ian Parsons
Cape/Hogarth Press £6.50

At the risk of offending some sensibilities I would suggest (and would not be the first to suggest) that the Poet Laureateship is a foolish anachronism, a post best reserved for authors of light verse like the present incumbent, and in no case a task to be undertaken by a serious poet, whatever that may be. Ian Parsons, in making this selection from the works of Cecil Day Lewis, has very wisely eschewed the embarrassing nonsense perpetrated by that once serious poet after he had decided to accept his butt of Malmsey. Day Lewis's decision is explicable, it seems to me, only in terms of the peculiar slippered gentility which afflicts so many English men of letters in middle life and which is the wonder of the literary world. Spanish poets particularly, in my experience, boggle and fume at the bland clerical treason which allows erstwhile Communist Party members and visitors to the Republican lines during the Civil War to put their poetic feet up and transform themselves into Charles Lamb. Look at Antonio Machado, they say; look at Osip Mandelstam; look at Ezra Pound: one must live dangerously. (There was, of course, John Cornford . . .) The career of someone like Cecil Day Lewis does seem to belong to a different order of reality from the careers of these other serious poets. Day Lewis was, I have no doubt, a good man, and certainly a skilful writer; but as for his contribution to the great, ceaseless and often dangerous struggle of the human spirit, one cannot do better than quote Hugh MacDiarmid's tart epitaph on the whole public-school-and-Oxbridge leftist movement of the Thirties: 'Ye cannae strike a match on a crumblin' wall.'

Day Lewis, however, made frequent use of incendiaristic imagery; fire and desire play an important part in his early lyric poetry, both in their erotic and their political manifestations. This bed-and-barricades nexus (all you need is love) was central to the Auden group's way of thinking. 'They fuck you up, your mum and dad,' says Larkin; and the de-fucking-up process, for the writers of the Thirties (many of them, though not Day Lewis, homosexual), was supposed to coincide with, and help ignite, the revolutionary dawn. What the Jarrow unemployed made of this is not known; but it would be churlish to deny that the programme had a touching rhetorical simplicity. In fact, most of the verse published by the Auden group at this time was prentice work: the real stuff didn't start to emerge until later, by which time they had rid themselves of their naïve middle-class 'socialism' and begun to pursue their individual preoccupations. I would gladly exchange all of Auden's pre-war verse for *New Year Letter*, written in New York when the decade was at an end; while MacNeice and Spender achieved a new intensity and resonance. Similarly, Day Lewis put together his best collection, *Word Over All* (1943), and went on to write *Poems 1943-1947*, which includes the much anthologised 'Statuette: Late Minoan':

> Goddess or girl, you are earth.
> The smile, the offered breast,
> They were the dream of one
> Thirsting as I for rest –
> As I, unblest.

Already, however, one can observe a lapidary, grammatically scrupulous quality making its appearance in that curious 'as I'. Would not 'like me' have been more human, more immediate? But then, it was not the poet's intention to associate himself with the anonymous Greek sculptor, merely with the thought of him as a cultural exhibit. 'Official' poetry is not far off, as he himself seemed to anticipate:

> Careful of his poetic p's and q's,
> This self-possessed master of circumspection
> Enjoyed a *mariage blanc* with the Muse
> Who never caught his verse in an erection.

Or can it really be that Day Lewis, on the strength of some witty love poems in the Metaphysical manner, thought of himself as a Dionysian figure?

Mr Parsons remarks on Day Lewis's prolific output, and on the variety of poetic modes he attempted: lyric, elegiac, narrative and dramatic. With the longer forms, where he tried to wed personal experience to a panoptic vision of industrial Britain, and yet preserve the lyrical intensity of shorter forms, he failed as many another modern poet has failed. He will not, I think, be remembered for *The Magnetic Mountain*, which is in any case too strongly influenced by Auden, to whom it is dedicated, but by a handful of lyrics, often Hardyesque in tone and setting, written some years later: 'Departure in the Dark', 'The Fault', 'The Rebuke'. These seem to me to come closer to the essential nature of the man than the strained work of his early years, where a middle-class sensibility struggles to articulate things that D. H. Lawrence had already said. He will be remembered also, I hope, for perfect examples of a form at which the Auden group excelled – the satirical song, a device imported by Auden from German theatre and cabaret. 'Two Songs' and 'A Carol' leave nothing to be desired:

> O hush thee my baby, thy cradle's in pawn;
> No blankets to cover thee, cold and forlorn.
> The stars in the bright sky look down and
> are dumb
> At the heir of the ages asleep in a slum.

There are also his translations of Virgil and of Valéry's *Le Cimetière marin*, perhaps the best available, with which Mr Parsons concludes this selection.

Day Lewis was born in Ireland (where his father, like MacNeice's, was a Church of Ireland clergyman), and liked to think of himself as an expatriate son. His last collection, *The Whispering Roots* (1970), celebrated his return to childhood scenes and his rather facile 'rediscovery' of his origins ('Something flows to the exile from what has been forsaken'); but one is left with the distinct impression that what is here rediscovered is not so much a place as a period, a time of servants, carriages and rectory gardens. They say that no one born since the first world war can understand the imaginative world of those born before it; and it was perhaps inevitable that 'the holiness of the heart's affections' should have led Day Lewis to regress in this way to a soft-centred nostalgia – although MacNeice never did, perhaps because he was more truly an expatriate son. In any case, the paradox remains that one of the leading lights of the left-wing literary movement of the Thirties was unable to rise to anything better. As for his much-vaunted interest in form, it was really nothing more than a matter of playing about with alternating long and short lines, rhymes and half-rhymes, as if he were taking part in a competition: he was in no real sense technically interesting. To what can we ascribe these failings?

> It seems that we must call
> Anything truth whose well
> Is deep enough,

he wrote in an early poem. Perhaps this highly gifted man's well was not very deep. More likely that, despite a lifetime's dedicated search, he never really discovered where it was.

Madge Hales

Chairs

> The hawthorn spikes
> attack me
> since loss is fear.
> Rowan poisons
> with blood berries.
>
> For this year two
> most dear
> sat in their chairs
> and rode
> over Lethe.
> Shall I be third?
>
> Or shall I avoid
> my chair?
> sit on the black hearth
> tiles
> which at least
> warms
> my cold behind.
>
> Or shall I
> clutch ghosts
> to my heart?
> retie my shoe laces
> expect nothing I get?

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Julian Barnes

Good Subject

Majesty: Elizabeth II and the House of Windsor by ROBERT LACEY *Hutchinson* £5.45

Kings, as Shaw observed in his Maxims for Revolutionists, are not born: they are made by universal hallucination. As their power and point diminish, the nature of the hallucination shifts accordingly. First packaged and honoured as gods, then as examples of human perfection, then as necessary constitutional bulwarks, they are now, according to Robert Lacey's theory, characterised and justified by their transcendent ordinariness.

George V, the definer of the modern monarchy, was, Mr Lacey concedes, personally drab, socially inept and intellectually dim; yet far from disqualifying him as Head of Church, State and Society, this made him 'exactly like most of his subjects' (you may recall the time – we were all wearing gardenia buttonholes and side-creased trousers). He was 'the first British monarch to exemplify the majesty of the ordinary man' (or, perhaps, the ordinariness of majesty?). Elizabeth II, described here as homespun, unintellectual and old-fashioned, is seen as the amplifier of this line: 'Majesty in her terms is the majesty of the common man.'

She's just like the girl next door, really (and with so many royal residences, there are few she is not next door to). Except, of course, that she is the richest woman in England; except that her untaxability is restoring the monarchy ('willy-nilly', in Mr Lacey's quaint phrase, as if there were a chance of a nilly) to its former unique pinnacle of wealth; and except that Mr Lacey, by every swooning phrase and anecdote, consistently contradicts his professed theme. The Royals are ordinary, but they are not, he hurries to indicate, *'so* ordinary'. Edward VIII was a 'glittering international celebrity'; the present team are 'more successful than any show-business product'; even the Queen's bladder capacity is something special – 'inexhaustible', which seems a vaguely disloyal epithet. Ordinariness is further belied by the glamourising excitement of Mr Lacey's prose, in which the Queen's stable-lads become 'the nut-brown little men who worship at the same shrine', and even a humble Sandringham boot-scraper becomes 'a brush like a fat hedgehog'.

Mr Lacey's toadyings are no more than you would expect in Jubilee year; he finds a cuddly phrase for each Royal (even Princess Anne – like the boot-scraper – is accorded 'bristly authenticity'). He believes for instance, that the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, 'travelling ceaselessly from Ritz to Ritz', exemplified 'the ultimate price society exacts for the pleasure of being its representative'. Lesser men might queue for exile on such terms. The serious problems of Elizabeth's reign, as he sees it, have been the Townsend and Snowdon affairs; the occasional mild flurries of public criticism are airily dismissed. Questioners of the Royal finances are 'concerned with the cost of everything and the value of nothing'. The Queen may be loaded, Mr Lacey admits, but she lives frugally, among 'battered bookcases', 'nondescript furniture' and a 'balding' office carpet: so why the fuss? She doesn't spend money extravagantly, he argues, as if this were almost the same as not having it at all.

Majesty, being diligently researched, inevitably contains interesting titbits, and inevitably establishes, willy-nilly, that the Windsors are chiefly ordinary in the sense of being ordinary members of the landed upper-class. Edward VIII encouraged Mussolini; the Queen Mother backs Rhodesia's whites; Princess Margaret, who has won the *Country Life* crossword comp several times (could she be Maud Gracechurch as well?), likes to pull rank; and the D of E conveniently believes that 'the quickest way to evaporate the average Briton's affection for the monarchy is to bottle him up in a traffic jam'. The book's unexpected hero, for me, was Post Office engineer Albert Tippele, who once spanked the infant Princess Elizabeth for rummaging in his tool-bag; while the most nauseatingly candid comment on the monarchy and its minions comes from a Palace aide: 'Our capital is stuffiness. We don't exist to divert or convert people. We Are.' Come back, Engineer Tippele, England hath need of thee.

Paul Johnson

Big Whig

The Holland House Diaries, 1831-40 edited by Abraham D. Kriegel *Routledge* £12.50

The third Lord Holland inherited his title as a child, was brought up at the knee of Charles James Fox, his uncle, and for many years was almost the sole dependable Whig spokesman in the Lords. It was through him (even more than Grey), and through the circle which gathered round him at Holland House in West Kensington, that the elixir of 18th-century Whiggism was preserved and transmuted into the spirit of 19th-century reform. In 1830, when Grey took office, he asked Holland to be Foreign Secretary. Had Holland accepted, British foreign policy (and Palmerston's career) would have been very different, but he declined on health grounds, took the sinecure of the Duchy of Lancaster, and remained an influential cabinet minister in Whig governments until his death in 1840.

Holland was a copious writer, mainly of pamphlets, and during his life he set down various reminiscences, published after his death as *Memoirs of the Whig Party* and *Further Memoirs of the Whig Party 1807-21*. But during the years 1831-40, while he was in cabinet, Holland also kept a political diary, intended as an *aide-mémoire*; this has been used by scholars but never before published. Mr Kriegel, an American don, now gives it us in full.

Have we here, then, a feast of Holland House wit and high Whig scandal? Not at all. Greville wrote of Holland's 'unflagging vivacity of spirit, inexhaustible fund of anecdote and sprightly wit', but there is very little of these things in the diary, and one can well understand why it was not published before. Thus, in 1832, Holland records a dinner at Holland House attended by Melbourne, Jeffrey and Sydney Smith:

> I scarcely ever heard more wit, learning and good sense in any society, and the remaining part of the Evening did not fall off when Talleyrand came and closed it with some anecdotes, both political and literary, in which his conversation abounds.

Yes: and I bet the wine was good too, but what use is it to us? The diary is full of such laconic information as 'Talleyrand and Sydney Smith dined at Holland House this day', and proves once again that there is more to being a Boswell than getting yourself to the right place at the right time.

Of course Holland was not writing to amuse, nor for posterity. He was a serious man keeping a record of what he rightly judged to be a great crisis in British history. His diary is particularly full for the years of Grey's ministry, up to 1834, and especially of all the intrigues and negotiations connected with the passage of the First Reform Bill – on this, indeed, it is a primary source of outstanding importance, for Holland gives very full descriptions of cabinet meetings, and of talks with King William IV and Tory and crossbench peers. The hero of the diary is unquestionably Grey, Holland's

Soil and Civilization
EDWARD HYAMS
From the Incas as soil creators to the dust bowls of Oklahoma in the 1920s, Edward Hyams looks at the way man has related to the soil throughout the ages. We are all environmentalists now but in 1952 when this pioneering book was first published it was justly described as 'the first of its kind to cover the vast panorama of human history from a strictly ecological point of view'. It is now reissued in paperback. £2.50

Return to the Naked Nagas
CHRISTOPH VON FÜRER-HAIMENDORF
In a mixture of personal experience and anthropological observation Professor Haimendorf describes the megalithic culture of the pre-literate Naga tribes on India's north-east borders. Originally published in 1939 as *The Naked Nagas*, this is a reissue with two new chapters describing return visits to the area in 1962 and 1970. In his last stay, with the Konyak Nagas, he found a general decay of their old customs and he warns of the possible hazards attached to their transition into the 20th century.
12 pages of photographs £4.95
JOHN MURRAY

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oldest political friend, who emerges as patient, courteous and conciliatory on details, resolute on essentials, a man of abounding humanity and honour and, almost incidentally, as a superb cabinet chairman and political realist, carrying the country through a constitutional convulsion without a drop of blood shed. Presiding over a disparate and inexperienced team, he made the cabinet system work reasonably well. With his replacement by Melbourne, a man without much principle or aim in life, the pace of reform slackens, and the cabinet system ceases to operate, its work dissolving into a series of bilateral deals. One notable aspect of the later 1830s was that Holland, interested in and knowledgeable about foreign affairs, was gradually pushed out of the picture by Palmerston, who by 1840 was virtually conducting his own policies.

Holland, like Grey, believed passionately in reform, and cared sincerely about the suffering of the masses. Yet he was a Whig, not a radical: the object of reform was to persuade the people to accept what he termed 'subordination', not to promote equality. The cabinets to which he belonged consisted of great landed peers, plus three or four MPs, usually scions of the aristocracy.

Holland often expressed surprise that otherwise sensible politicians, some of them keen reformers, should trouble themselves about such 'baubles' and 'trifles' as a marquisate or a garter. He cites the case of 'Radical Jack' Lambton, perhaps the most left-wing of all Grey's team, who insisted first on a peerage, then on an earldom. Lambton, Grey's unruly son-in-law, was the most difficult (and interesting) member of the cabinet, and it says a lot for Holland's non-skills as a diarist that he noted of Lambton in 1831: 'I am afraid his forward temper will ere long furnish more matter for my diary of Ministerial transactions than will be pleasant to witness or record.' Indeed it did. At a Cabinet dinner at Lord Althorp's in 1832, he 'lost all command of himself' and accused Grey of concealing changes in the Reform Bill from him,

> said he was a Member of the publick government; he could not and by God he would not agree to things he did not know; that he had a right to see all that had past and he would.

Another lively figure who pops up from time to time is the King, prejudiced, irrational, ignorant and hen-pecked, but not unlikeable. He entertained some weird ideas about the constitution. In 1835, disagreeing with the cabinet over Canada, he threatened 'he would turn out ten Ministries and have them all impeached rather than sanction such a dismemberment of the Empire'. Again, annoyed by his wife's praise of a cunning anti-Reform speech by the Bishop of Exeter, he told her:

> It may be clever or eloquent, Madam, of that I am no judge; but though the *peers* may occasionally be factious, By God, the *Bishops* are in that house to defend my crown and not follow vagaries of their own.

Towards the end of the diary he is abruptly replaced by the young Victoria, who appears in these pages as prim, self-possessed, obstinate and hard. Holland records with some indignation William's use, or abuse, of the prerogative, especially his dismissal of Melbourne in 1834; but he smiles benevolently on Victoria's outrageous behaviour over the Bedchamber Crisis of 1839, which gave the Melbourne Government another two years of undeserved office and patronage. But then Holland was, first and last, a Whig.

Philip French

Fly Him

Black Sun: The Brief Transit and Violent Eclipse of Harry Crosby by GEOFFREY WOLFF *Hamish Hamilton* £4.95

The term 'lost generation' has two different and complementary meanings. The first, more literal one was that used in France immediately after World War I to describe the absent thousands who had died on the Western Front. The second, a coinage of Getrude Stein's, referred to those who had survived the war and were living disorientated, self-destructive existences on borrowed time. Hemingway used Stein's phrase ('you are all a lost generation') as epigraph to *The Sun Also Rises*. Our greatest writer of the 'lost generation' in the French sense is Wilfred Owen, but Nicholas Mosley has recently sought to persuade us that its exemplary hero was a non-writing (or one-poem) author, Julian Grenfell. There are numerous contenders for the title of the greatest writer of Stein's 'lost generation' of American expatriates, but the role of exemplary hero has usually been conferred on Harry Crosby, whose background and early life were something like Grenfell's.

Crosby flits through books on the Twenties like Peter Pan between the Darlings' London home and Never-Never Land, and if there is, as Robert Rauschenberg insists, a gap between art and life, that is where Harry chose to live. He came from a well-connected Boston family and went straight from his smart private school to the Western Front as a volunteer ambulance driver at the age of 18 in 1917. A wealthy, priggish, anti-Semitic Christian virgin, he crossed the Atlantic on the same blacked-out, U-boat-dogged ship that carried Cole Porter to Europe. And one might feel that in Harry's later public persona there was as much of the high-living Porter as the bull-baiting Hemingway. Harry survived the war (believing that God had saved his life at Verdun), got his cherished Croix-de-Guerre and returned home for two wild, hard-drinking years at Harvard, where he relentlessly pursued the mirthless pranks that were to play so large a part in his life. Then he met his first great love, Polly Peabody, seven years his senior, mother of two, and married to the alcoholic scion of one of Boston's most eminent families. It was the Boston social register's equivalent of the meeting a dozen years later of Bonnie and Clyde. Beacon Hill was duly shocked, and Harry and Polly took off for Europe, where he first worked in the Paris branch of uncle J. P. Morgan's bank. *Folie à deux* must have been so common in Paris then that no one was too disturbed by the outrageous behaviour of the Crosbys, and when Polly changed her name to Caresse it was not much odder than other weird pseudonyms people were assuming at the time.

Having been relieved of his cherished virginity by his future wife, Harry broke out of his late Victorian cocoon and began to fly, Icarus-like, towards the sun. He became a fanatical sun cultist, sexually promiscuous, a drug taker and orgiast, an obsessive gambler and racegoer and a self-proclaimed poet. The values of Boston were turned upon their head. Like Dorian Gray, to whose myth and ethic he was in thrall, Harry was extraordinarily resilient in the face of debauchery. Moreover he managed to produce an amazing quantity of bad verse and lurid prose-poetry, most of which he published himself, as well as putting a good deal of effort into his own Black Sun Press, which published Lawrence, Joyce, Hart Crane and others in elegant limited editions, and into *transition* magazine, on which he worked as an assistant to Eugene Jolas. His obsession with death, which was part late-Victorian Boston hangover, part necrophiliac affectation (black suits, a perpetual black gardenia), part aesthetic garbage about the rounding out of life-as-art, finally caught up with him, and in December 1929, at the age of 31, he shot one of his current mistresses and then himself during a visit to New York. The deaths occurred in the studio of a genuine artist borrowed for the occasion; the day before, Harry had emerged from a boozy farewell party at Hart Crane's Brooklyn flat and his absence from this world was first noted when he failed to arrive to take tea at the town house of Pierpont Morgan. Truly, he lived and died between two worlds.

Harry was an enigma to the popular press, but to the literary world he was both a caution and a vindication. Admittedly Edith Wharton had called him 'a sort of half-crazed cad', but then she was jealous of the appeal Harry had for her one-time lover, Walter Van Rensselaer Berry, whose protégé Harry had become. Others saw him as acting out their particular fantasies in a way that made literature seem dangerous. (He was determined, for instance, after reading *The Hollow Men* to go out with a bang, not a whimper.) Eliot, Pound, Lawrence, Hemingway and Crane paid richly equivocal tributes to Harry during his lifetime or in solicited prefaces for posthumous collections of his work, but they didn't do it just for money. Harry wasn't in any conscious sense a patron of the arts; he was far too ambitious for that. His money went into special editions and into stylish gestures like deciding to pay Lawrence in gold dollars, which were smuggled out of America and then carried to Florence by the Duke of Argyll. His literary admirers clearly did understand that the rich are different from us, even Hemingway, who spoke of Harry's 'wonderful gift of carelessness'.

His widow Caresse attempted to keep Harry's literary reputation alive (as late as the Sixties Cyril Connolly was engaged to prepare an edition of Harry's diaries), but it was Malcolm Cowley, in his influential account of the Twenties expatriate ex-

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perience, *Exile's Return*, who made Crosby the emblematic victim-hero for his own and subsequent generations. Cowley, however, has since explained that he chose Crosby through his inability to write about Hart Crane's suicide.

There is much of interest to be gleaned from Geoffrey Wolff's biography. I did not know, for instance, that Hart Crane's father invented the sweets known as 'Lifesavers' – which adds an extraordinary resonance to the fact that Crane jumped off a liner in the Caribbean and deliberately submerged in a sea full of life-belts thrown into the water by his fellow passengers, among them, Mr Wolff tells us, Cowley's estranged wife (and Crane's first heterosexual love). But the overall effect of this deeply (if unimaginatively) researched, over-written, chaotically organised book is to remind one of the old journalistic adage, 'Don't investigate the story too much or you'll kill it.' From *Black Sun*, Harry Crosby emerges as a tedious madman – sick, untalented, uninteresting, at best a harbinger of the victims of the Rock Era, or a sort of high-society predecessor of Charles Manson. Wolff's book indeed threatens to do for Harry Crosby what William Bradford Huie's *The Hiroshima Pilot* did for Major Claude Eatherly – destroy the exquisitely spun web of mythology that constitutes the demands their exemplary heroes made upon our attention. As the newspaper editor says to the young reporter at the end of John Ford's *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*: 'This is the West. When the legend becomes fact, print the legend.'

Jeremy Bugler

Seeing the Light

The Poverty of Power: Energy and the Economic Crisis by BARRY COMMONER *Cape* £5.50

In the Thirties, General Motors developed a new line of buses. GM's salesmen came up against resistance to their new product; most American cities already had streetcars and trolleybuses transporting their people efficiently and cleanly and so had little interest in junking valuable vehicles that were working well. General Motors executives came together and decided to set up a new company with the specific job of buying and closing down streetcar companies. The new GM 'transit corporation' moved in first on Kalamazoo and Saginaw, Michigan and Springfield, Ohio. The denizens of those burgs soon found themselves travelling by GM bus.

Censured by an angry American Transit Association, GM dissolved its streetcar-busting company, but at once set up another company with the same aims with Standard Oil of California and the Firestone Tyre Company. Their new venture boomed. By 1949, General Motors had been active in getting buses to replace streetcars and trolleybuses in 45 cities, from New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore to Los Angeles. Taken to court in March 1949, General Motors and its associates were convicted of criminally conspiring to replace electric-powered streetcars with petrol- or diesel-fuelled buses. In savage reprisal, General Motors was fined $5,000 and its treasurer, who helped to break up Los Angeles's $100m. streetcar system, was docked a buck.

This disgraceful tale is related in detail in this book by Barry Commoner, the ecologist and *sotto-voce* Marxist from the University of Washington, St Louis. He does not fail to point out today that American cities are urgently examining 'light electric railroads' – that is, streetcars – to solve their problems, as they do so well in a number of European cities. But he does not mention that GM also busied itself in buying up suburban commuter rail lines, and then closing them. He points the obvious moral: GM were interested in selling buses (or cars), not in providing cities with transport. Their motive was of course profit, by no means a faithful servant of social organisations like cities.

General Motors' criminal behaviour is only a particularly highly-coloured example that Barry Commoner uses to argue his broad theme that the profit motive has in the long run disastrous environmental *and* economic consequences. But the best of this provoking book is not so much in the concluding chapters, where Commoner pulls the strings of his argument together, but in the brilliant guided tour of America and its energy that he conducts. Since Americans use more energy to air-condition their houses, cars and (now) their tractors than China uses altogether, Commoner's Tour includes the great sites of energy-guzzling. But like the best guides, he starts by setting out the context, and his explanation of the relevance of the Second Law of Thermodynamics ought to do more to make non-scientists understand its relevance than C. P. Snow's appeal all those years ago.

The point is, if you break the Second Law, you get into trouble with the Conservation Police. Commoner sets out how the Second Law provides a way of judging how to use different forms of energy, which fuel to apply to which task. 'The Second Law', he says,

> tells us that it is not energy that needs to be conserved, because in fact energy is never consumed. What does need to be conserved is a certain quality that is associated with energy but which it may possess in differing degrees. This quality – the available *work* that can be obtained from energy – is not conserved; it is irretrievably lost whenever energy is used to produce work.

What has been happening in America and other developed countries, especially Britain, is that the industrial system has been flouting the Second Law and using the wrong kinds of energy for the wrong tasks. Electricity is a very good way of providing power but a very inefficient way of heating houses. In the United States and Britain, huge quantities of power are produced to warm houses, and extra heat produced in this process is wasted. Nuclear power is the greatest second-law-breaker of all: using 'nuclear radiation for the relatively mild task of boiling water violates the familiar caution against attacking a fly with a cannon'.

Commoner finds the US has gradually been turning from efficient uses of energy to wasteful, and the motive has always been profit to some private corporation. Even in agriculture, the farming revolution has been to cut down the way plants avail themselves of solar radiation and to replace it with bought-and-sold highly profitable fertilisers.

Solar energy emerges from this book as the true hero, hard-working but ignored, which can yet rescue us all. I tend to believe this, and to agree that one reason why solar energy is so ignored, especially by the nuclear-drunks in our Department of Energy, is that no one owns it, no one 'markets' it. Solar energy has no lobby. As Commoner puts it:

> Unlike oil or uranium, sunlight is not a commodity to be bought and sold; it cannot be possessed; its value is not inherent, but derives from its use . . . Solar energy enjoins us attend to the task; to find the best way to link the task to resources; to cherish the resources that nature lends us; to find value in their social use, rather than profit in their private possession.

Profit-taking leads Commoner in his final chapters to restate the Marxist view that our method of production will produce a collapse, causing immense environmental and economic damage. The same grim prospect is held by other environmental writers, notably Robert Heilbroner in his *Business Civilisation in Decline* (Marion Boyars, 1976, £3.95 and £1.95). Heilbroner, a self-

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confessed social democrat, tends to agree with Commoner that modern industrial society is likely to collapse, mainly because it will be unable to generate enough new investment, will put too many people out of jobs, and will run out of resources.

But where Heilbroner's instincts seem right and Commoner's wrong is in attributing the likely causes of such a collapse. For Commoner, there is only one guilty agent: capitalism. He very wrongly underplays the roles of population increase and the profligate use of resources to pin it solely on capitalism. Heilbroner is prepared to see capitalism in the dock, but believes the crisis is one not simply of capitalist societies but of *industrial* nations. Socialist states with advanced economies find themselves in the same crisis, in the same shattered landscape. Commoner's final suggestion that the major areas of business must be nationalised may seem radical in the United States. In Europe, it may still be relevant but it does not *ensure* a society gentle with its surroundings and secure in its future.

Susannah Clapp

Blood Sports

The Cousins by MAX EGREMONT *Collins* £6.50

In March 1888 George Wyndham, fresh from supporting Arthur Balfour's coercion policy in Ireland, wrote to his cousin Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, newly released from an Irish prison, where he had spent some time working out anagrams of Balfour's name. 'We have', Wyndham pleaded,

> so many grounds for friendship, our common love of Sport and of Poetry, and especially our common blood, and I think it would be very foolish to allow differences of Politics and of Opinion to interfere with it in any way.

Blunt agreed with the principle. So does Max Egremont, who has written a crammed, interesting, patchy book about his ancestors, in which he aims to show how a friendship based on common interests and the customs and ideals of class can triumph over intellectual differences.

For most of *The Cousins* the friendship is rather less in evidence than the individuals. Throughout their lives Blunt and Wyndham met, corresponded and thought well of each other, but since both were politically active and differed on practically every major political issue of the time, a large part of the book is spent measuring divergences and parallels rather than the heralded intertwinings. At times this makes for a striking narrative. Blunt, the older of the two by some 20 years, and always the more extravagantly exotic, fled the diplomatic service and early dalliances for travels with his wife in India, Egypt and Arabia. These resulted in a hatred of British rule in India, a collection of Arab brood mares and a fierce championship of Egyptian nationalism, of Arabi Pasha and the Mahdi. George Wyndham's first posting, bright-eyed from Sandhurst, was to Egypt to subdue the Mahdi's supporters. Wyndham's first political appointment was as private secretary to Arthur Balfour, then Chief Secretary for Ireland. His zealous support for his chief's policies – including the Crimes Act – earned him the title of 'Balfour's devil in Ireland' (he was later known also as 'Miss Arthur'); defiance of the Crimes Act led to Wilfrid Blunt's oakum-picking spell in prison as an advocate of Home Rule. When Wyndham was himself appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland, the cousins worked together more sympathetically, but before this the Boer War had further polarised political opinions – with Wyndham at the War Office, and Blunt raging in his poetry that 'The White Man's Burden, Lord, is the burden of his cash'.

The parallels in their public lives are more striking than surprising. Politically aware people could hardly avoid being exercised by these topics; the fact that Blunt and Wyndham aired their views publicly and to considerable effect makes each a suitable subject for biography, but not necessarily for an illuminating pattern. Here and elsewhere *The Cousins* suffers from the inevitable difficulties of double biography. Too much has to be said too rapidly, and while there is a good deal of able political summarising (particularly on Ireland), there is also considerable confusion and congestion (particularly on Egypt). Too much also is left unexamined. At times Mr Egremont is almost over-persuasive about the interest and excitement of his subjects' lives and tantalises with lack of explanation. Blunt's desert exploits have been extensively described elsewhere, but it is nonetheless infuriating to be told of one journey only that 'after various mishaps they reached their objective'. It is teasing, too, to learn of Judith Blunt's violent scorn for her father without learning more about its cause. Part of her objection apparently sprang from what has been generously described as Blunt's 'Mohammedan attitude' towards women – an ideological stance which occasionally encompassed Judith's friends. Mr Egremont spends some time disdaining the idea that he should catalogue and quiz Blunt's extramarital adventures but, if not essential, it would nevertheless be interesting to know more about what led Lady Anne – 'a good wife', though given to wearing a fishing-hat and mac in bed – to leave him after 36 years, wishing that they'd stayed alone together in the desert.

But perhaps the chief danger in twinning people – particularly when they are harnessed in contrast – is the exclusion of other comparisons and nicer distinctions. Confronted, for example, with the contrast of the cousins' last years – Wyndham died young and disappointed, talking of the 'piebald hybrids' invading Britain and hoping for a rural regeneration; Blunt lived into his eighties, visited by Yeats and Pound and attended by various devoted women – there is little to do but shrug and be sad. More interesting deductions and observations can be drawn from their common experience – of being literary and owning land. Mr Egremont charts Wyndham's dashes from Plutarch to Parliament, sets Blunt's poetic activities alongside his grouse-shooting and squirearchical pride, and investigates the antics of both in the Crabbet Club, with its sets of naked lawn tennis, its 'post-prandial oratory' and deliberate prankishness. In doing so he indicates some of the main qualities of their society style: the display of ardour and enthusiasm which enabled George Curzon, forced to concede defeat to Wyndham in the race for Sibell Grosvenor's favours, to drop his tears tidily 'on the blotting paper'; the clubbishness which made it possible to 'calculate' that at this time Sibell had 80 admirers; the courting of frivolity which led Wyndham to declare that what was needed in modern life was 'more feasting'. It's a mixture which does much to explain the peculiar quality of Wyndham's good prose: his letters, of which Mr Egremont rightly makes extensive use, show a zest for causes and adventures tempered by a quizzical eagerness – an ability to buttonhole his correspondent by treating large news as if it were gossip: 'between you and me and the gatepost', he wrote to his mother at the time of the Boer War, 'we mobilise on Monday'.

The Cousins contains many good anecdotes and many poor formulations. Mr Egremont has a tendency to moralise obtrusively and to bury his characters under their own definitions (in which 'sensitivity' plays too large a part). But when he lets the story tell itself, it proves intriguing.

James Fenton

La Saigonnaise

Dust of Life by LIZ THOMAS *Hamish Hamilton* £4.50

Here is a book by a woman who saw the last years of the Thieu regime and the first eight months of Ho Chi Minh City – a singular experience, the more remarkable for the circumstances in which it was undergone. Most journalists at that time watched Saigon from relatively insulating hotels. We were familiar with street society – we could hardly have avoided it – but we were less familiar with the home life of those who pestered us in the cafés. We knew them as poor, desperate and determined people, but Liz Thomas actually *knew* them.

She writes about her experience of working in hospitals and orphanages, and about founding her own girls' home. Her manner is direct and totally without artifice – indeed one could have wished for a much greater degree of selection and editorial judgment in the presentation of the material. Miss Thomas does not seek to interpret, only to record, her experiences. As a result, when she describes the fall of Saigon and the early stages of the new regime, she is by implication rather less than fair to the Vietnamese Communists, implying that they wilfully impoverished Saigon for some obscure ideological motive. In this view, however, she reflects the disappointed and depressed reactions of a large number of Saigonese

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(and not just the bourgeoisie) in the aftermath of the war.

Miss Thomas had been told by the British Embassy that if she stayed on in Saigon she would undoubtedly be arrested, raped and shot by the Vietcong. She describes what actually happened: she was neither raped nor shot (although she was once arrested and several times offered marriage by the North Vietnamese), how everything went well in the early stages, and then how the officers of Thieu's army disappeared, how possessions were confiscated and 're-education' was begun. Miss Thomas was probably the only Briton to undergo Vietnamese re-education, and she could have told us much more about what it was like.

She is at her best as an eye-witness and recorder of Vietnamese behaviour. The girls with whom she works, for instance, are always taking massive overdoses of sleeping-pills, or injecting the dissolved pills into their veins. They veer between happiness in their new home and the recurrent desire to return to the street. One girl makes up her face in order to go to church at Christmas. She plasters her face with a whole bottle of foundation, and the result is so terrible that she slashes her arms in horror at what she has become. One of the boys, having worked himself into a murderous fury, cuts off his finger rather than commit the murder.

Such details bring back vividly the neurotic, suicidal side of Vietnamese life in the big cities of the south. Miss Thomas is pessimistic about the future of the nation:

> I don't think they will ever really be happy. The end of the war was only a temporary respite from misery. They will always be poor and have to work long hours for their daily ration of rice.

A sad conclusion, and yet one cannot help wondering whether the poverty, malnutrition, drug addiction and disease, which Miss Thomas spent her time fighting, are not nearer to a solution now than before.

Paddy Beesley

Just Like Us

Ordinary People by JUDITH GUEST *Collins* £3.50
Adonis' Garden by T. E. APTER *Heinemann* £3.90
Brothers Keepers by DONALD E. WESTLAKE *Hodder* £3.95
Snake by JOHN CROSBY *Cape* £3.95

Ordinary People is Judith Guest's first novel; but fortunately the softy reviewer is spared the usual attack of double standards by the news that in America the paperback rights have been sold for $550,000. Five book clubs have bought it, and the film rights have been snapped up by Robert Redford. Which should be indication enough that *Ordinary People* is not about ordinary people; rather, it's about the sort of characters – rich, urban, heterosexual WASPs – that subscribers to book clubs imagine to be ordinary people. This isn't a plea for the kind of racial and economic tokenism you get in telly ads and in some breathily democratic areas of fiction; but the emblematic status which leaves Mrs Guest's characters bow-legged under its weight is rousingly misconceived. Mordecai Richler is nearer the mark with his unironic praise for Mrs Guest's 'generous unprejudiced approach to suburban affluence'.

That said, *Ordinary People* is, within the American genre of the comfortable novel about pain (cf *Love Story*), cleanly imagined and largely unembarrassing. Conrad Jarrett, 17, sensitive and bright, returns home from the shrinkery to which he has been driven by guilt over his brother's death. Trapped between a critical, demanding mother and a soggily affectionate father, Conrad nearly fouls up again by asking the Big Questions – From what? Toward what? – until a jokey, scruffy psychiatrist gradually manages to propel him back into the distracting process of living. Conrad's depressions, his withdrawals from human contact, and the petty yet intolerable humiliations of school are given a tight inevitability; and the hearty surge of relief when you realise he's on the mend and likely to lay off his wrists for a bit is undeniable. For all the 'ordinary' ending, though, with its full laughter-and-tears bit (the boy is mended but the marriage fails to survive), there's a worrying endorsement in Mrs Guest's attitude to her characters. Conrad gets better by getting a girl and a car, and perceiving that his parents are not perfect after all; but mainly by denying his originally disorientating questions. 'No sense taking the questions seriously, if there aren't any answers,' he tells his girl, and the novel ends with a search-me rubber-stamping of this uncontroversial view: the world's a puzzle, friend, best to carry on being rich together. Good box-office; fair cop-out.

T. E. Apter's *Adonis' Garden*, which recycles characters from her first novel (a fact oddly suppressed by author and publisher) also features large slices of pained loving, though this time rendered with less arty clarity and more clogged authenticity. Emotional paralysis, bright possessiveness and fastidious disgust squat fatly on the lives of her three musical couples: flash conductor Claud and his mutiple-sclerotic Greek widow; gross, cake-scoffing soprano Henrietta, seeking in a lissom scene-shifter a subjective correlative to her stage roles; and icy, sardonic Kate, caught in a stop-go relationship with a middle-aged baritone. 'You know,' remarks Kate at the end, 'I think it would be impossible, whatever the circumstances, not to be relieved when someone close to you dies'; and this sour, thoroughly un-Guest-like truth is the logical conclusion of an intense, sometimes fussy novel, strong on unpredictabilities and ambiguities of feeling. Miss Apter revels in the ennui at the heart of passion, the lust for solitariness in close relationships. None of her three relationships comes to a firm conclusion, except the conclusion that it is impossible to stuff people's feelings for one another into the available social slots without them getting damaged. As Claud's father, who is the nearest thing in the novel to a balanced, seeing man, observes, 'Even good marriages are only good as marriages go.'

Apart from that heroic Python sequence of trampolining nuns, the world of the cloister has always struck me as pretty resistable comic material. In a secular age there are few reasons for attempting the savage indignation (not to mention the wit and bravery) with which Voltaire and Diderot put the boot in; and monks and nuns have steadily retreated into cuddly oddities, good mostly for a patronising chuckle when they fret about sin and the temptations of the world. The limitations are not lost on Donald E. Westlake, who has his hero monk mistaken for Santa Claus not once but twice. Secular misunderstanding of the prayermongers comprises one half of this fluffy comedy about the fight to save a quaint old Park Avenue monk hangout from the developers; the other half, you'll not be flabbergasted to discover, turns on monastic misunderstanding of the straight world. Goodness, unworldliness and purity, as they tend to in comedy, triumph haphazardly over self-interest, money-worship and desire. Standard monk-jokes occur (viz, 'Don't give me that holier than thou attitude'), each followed, in this critic's mind at least, by a face like Derek Nimmo's pretending to look excruciatingly pained at what it has just said.

John Crosby's smart and engagingly nasty thrillers are beginning to corner the market in sympathetic girl terrorists. *Snake*, his second, features two of them, both American, one from the early, Jerry Rubin, Jesus-freaking generation, the other, more murderous and more lesbian, from the SLA generation. Both are pursued by a fading, bookish G-man who, like Mr Crosby, offers them a surprisingly decent amount of understanding. As in *An Affair of Strangers*, the terrorists' personal motivations are as important as their professional aims, with emotional nemesis timed to coincide with the winding-up of the case. Mr Crosby has helpfully swotted up on the appropriate guerrilla manuals, and is unquestionably the man to go to next time you need to launder money or painfully incommode somebody (and all you need is a couple of those corn-on-the-cob forks).

Marxist Bias

In the Times Educational Supplement this week Professor Julius Gould argues that "Schooling and Society," a major new Open University course, is heavily slanted and constitutes "a disservice both to the university and its students."

THE TIMES
Educational Supplement
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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Anthony Howard

Analysing Mr McIntyre

Sixteen months ago, and just six weeks before his death, William Hardcastle wrote a zestful piece in the *Listener* celebrating the tenth birthday of the *World at One*. It was not in any way a remarkable article – but it did draw a remarkable response. In the *Listener*'s correspondence column the following week a letter appeared angrily taking issue with virtually everything Hardcastle had written – and in particular championing the cause of the BBC Old Guard about whom he had been characteristically irreverent. One particular sentence from that letter has stuck in my mind ever since – 'I have never been persuaded that the number of people who listen to a programme tells us much about the quality or value of what is broadcast.' Of course, since the days of Reith, there have been any number of grey non-communicators gliding through the corridors of Portland Place who have always stuck through thick and thin to that doctrine – but it does come as something of a shock to discover that one of them should now be in charge of our principal radio network.

For the letter was written by Ian McIntyre – then the freelance presenter of Thursday night's prestige *Analysis* but now the controversial new Controller of Radio 4 who has just produced his new programme schedules for the year starting in May. For anyone baffled, as I initially was, by the changes Mr McIntyre is proposing to introduce, the Letters column of the *Listener* for 9 October 1975 is a very present help in trouble: for it provides the key to his thinking and the central textual justification for his determination to drag Radio 4 – kicking and screaming or not – back into the mid-Sixties.

Nor is that intended merely as an emotive phrase. Anyone looking back at the famous 1969 document *Broadcasting in the Seventies* can see for himself just how firmly the engines of Broadcasting House are now to be put in reverse. Where that document – credited at the time to the new Director General-designate, Ian Trethowan, but in fact the brainchild of the best Controller Radio 4 ever had, Gerard Mansell – went out of its way to emphasise the importance of having 'four main news and magazine periods', the new schedules deliberately aim at cutting back and curtailing the 'sequences' (as they came to be known in BH *argot*). Thus on Saturdays the morning *Today* show and *PM* in the afternoon disappear altogether, while on weekdays they and their associated programmes lose a total of an hour-and-a-half's air time. More serious, however, is the way in which Mr McIntyre appears to have arbitrarily dismissed the whole concept on which *Broadcasting in the Seventies* was based: where it declared against 'mixed programming' – believing that each network should cater for one particular interest – he has reverted to the 'brantub' approach to broadcasting.

That is not perhaps surprising. For it so happens that I have a vivid memory of Ian McIntyre as a young BBC producer in the late Fifties – he had worked, I think, first on the old ultra-respectable *At Home and Abroad* ('Good evening. This is Richard Goold-Adams with our normal mixture of reports from both at home and abroad'); but by the time I met him was one of the cold-chicken-and-salad circus of Stephen Bonarjee's *Ten O'Clock* (complete with Big Ben chimes). He was an excellent producer of what, I think, could best be called 'the reflective school': you appeared, as I remember it, with your script (normally some 600 words or four minutes in length), were immediately led into a kind of script conference from which you eventually emerged for your reward – a glass of wine, a bit of chicken and lettuce and the chance to chat in a civilised fashion with some much more distinguished guests like Jo Grimond or Alf Robens. (Not everyone, it's fair to say, lasted the course: a friend of mine once inquired during an increasingly agitated huddle over his script 'Look, who's doing this broadcast, you or me?' – and was promptly shown the door.) Even, however, those who avoided that kind of pitfall could always count on being safely home in good time to listen to themselves in peace – urgency, immediacy, even topicality never being the name of the game.

Nor, it seems, is it to be the name of Radio 4 after next April. The man who could rebuke Bill Hardcastle for having had a hand in 'blurring the distinction – some of us thought it a valuable one – between news programmes and current affairs programmes' has certainly held fast to his beliefs. 'The most important single change in the news and current affairs field' – to borrow Mr McIntyre's own phrase – is to be the introduction of a new half-hour news bulletin every weekday night at six o'clock. Nothing in itself wrong with that – except that it has been purchased at a rather heavy price: the complete elimination of any news bulletin longer than five minutes between 6.30 p.m. and 7 a.m. on weekdays (when *Today* itself is anyway to lose half its air time). Down at LBC they should be laughing themselves silly.

But *Today* is not to be the only casualty of Mr McIntyre's desire for radio current affairs to stand back, as it were, from the day's developments. One 25-minute sequence – the 7 p.m. *World in Focus* (up to now the principal user of BBC foreign news correspondents: therein no doubt its sin) – is to be abolished altogether; Douglas Stewart's *The World Tonight* is to have its wings clipped from 45 minutes to half-an-hour, while *The World This Weekend* (once the flagship in the whole radio current affairs fleet) is to be cut down to frigate size by ending after April at twenty-to-two rather than two o'clock.

All this, of course, is part of Mr McIntyre's grand design to reassert what he rather grandly calls 'the primacy of news'. If that phrase means anything, it is – I suspect – something rather different: a determination to get back to the settled days before strange rogue elephants like Bill Hardcastle and mischievous Pucks like Andrew Boyle came along and actually – by means of programmes like the *World at One* and *PM* – succeeded in creating audiences where none had ever grown before. What, of course, they both understood is something that Mr McIntyre either fails to see or finds altogether too distasteful to grasp: that in the war it has to wage against television, radio has only two weapons at its disposal – speed and flexibility. Neither, it seems to me, is likely to be made much of in Mr McIntyre's wholly predictable desire for radio to have a weekly *Profile* ('emphasising interview or documentary techniques'), a *Panorama* of its own (produced from Manchester) or even – another straight grab from television – something called *Nation to Nation* ('a monthly programme that will link speakers in a number of foreign countries').

But that is only half the story. In many ways the most depressing aspect of Mr McIntyre's revanchism is his apparent desire to resurrect (I almost wrote disinter) 'Radio Light Entertainment'. If Broadcasting House ever held the secret of this particular *ersatz* art-form, it has long since lost it – a fact that Mr McIntyre himself appears to concede by his declared intention to reintroduce from September a season of what he rather tweely calls 'The Golden Oldies' (by which he apparently means repeats of *Round the Horn*, *The Goon Show*, *Hancock's Half-Hour* etc.). Strangely, these revivals will be filling the slot on Tuesday night – 10.30-11.00 p.m. – which might well have been thought ideally suited to the much-underestimated arts magazine *Kaleidoscope*, once again denied its ambition for a time in the schedule allowing it to take in West End curtain-down reviews. What authority has decreed we need at that hour is a laugh and a giggle – and, like it or lump it, that is what we are going to get.

Indeed, Mr McIntyre's entire approach rather reminds me of that of the never very popular uncle at the children's party choosing and directing every different game that is played, and as everyone else gets more bored and miserable insisting that everyone is enjoying themselves hugely and that it's all a lot of fun. It is not exactly a secret that his initial plans for Radio 4 were hardly discussed with his colleagues – and in the schedules that he has now circulated I cannot find the word 'audience' mentioned once. So a whole new shape for a national radio network depends ultimately on the prejudices and predilections of a single individual. In a public corporation that approach is surely typical of the kind of outdated outlook that the Annan Committee, which finished its work last week, ought to have been examining. Let us hope it has.

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Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

Jumpy

Tales from the Vienna Woods *Olivier*
German Skerries *Bush*
Traps *Theatre Upstairs*

The chunk of chestnut tree that cracked open Horvath's head in the Champs Elysées back in 1938, instantly killing him, also managed to strike down his reputation for the next 20-odd years. But then the Germans began to elevate him into the idol and influence he apparently is today, and now we, too, have the chance to see if he amounts to more than a period phenomenon, the Austro-Hungarian *enfant terrible* whose scurrilities infuriated the ascendant Nazis. The answer, I would suggest, is that yes, he does, in spite of all evidence to the contrary. On the face of it, *Tales from the Vienna Woods* is just another glum variation on what any statistical survey would surely reveal as the commonest theme of the late 19th and early 20th-century theatre in Europe, that of the outcast Magdalen, the soft and vulnerable nymph destroyed by society for presuming to stain its pure sheets. A toy-merchant's daughter, Marianne, offers her artless heart to a fetching wastrel, has his child, is rejected by him, and lands up in a nightclub, sporting her pubic hair at a party that happens to include the father who has disowned her. The grim reaper then cuts down her son, and she is left with no good reason for prolonging her chewed-up life. If you could mark an author on his plot alone, Horvath would not even scrape a pass.

But you can't. Any just examiner knows he must take into account such matters as the quality of the characterisation and the originality of the dialogue, both, as it happens, specialities of Horvath. The worst of his people have something to be said for them, the best something against. The most attractive character onstage, the one who remains dauntless in defence of poor, ostracised Marianne, is perfectly prepared to proclaim herself an anti-Semite in order to ingratiate herself sexually with a priggish Prussian half her age. And Marianne herself doesn't behave in at all the conventional way when helping hands come to lift her out of the social sink. Where we might have expected a fragile penitent, a butterfly broken on the wheel, Horvath offers us a thoroughly re-educated romantic, embittered, cynical and hard, not above snapping 'I don't give a shit' at the master-butcher who still nurses a dumb devotion for her. Kate Nelligan, all frisk and bounce before the fall, all withered and wintry after it, chronicles the progress of this emotional paralysis with deadly effect.

But that still isn't quite it. What distinguishes Horvath from the many dramatists who would people such a plot with moral caricatures, and even from the few who would people it with people, is something else. It's there when the two doomed lovers jointly thrill at the discovery of the little they have in common: 'I'm going to be cremated' . . . 'so am I'. It's there, too, in the sudden way a conversation at a picnic can veer to the transmigration of souls, or another, this time in the nightclub, to the equally unlikely subject of evolution. Chekhov is, I suppose, the obvious comparison, and, indeed, the playwright Peter Handke invokes him in a programme tribute to Horvath's 'insane phrases, which show the leaps and contradictions in man's consciousness'. But if we're to trust Christopher Hampton's translation, which seems excellent throughout, obvious comparison doesn't mean direct debt. Horvath may snitch plots from his fellow-men, but when it comes to dialogue he prefers to raid the primary sources. And so there it is, a verbal treat, swivelling from mood to mood in the space of a comma, quirky, unpredictable and above all fresh: sufficient in itself to reclaim cliché for reality.

There's something in Horvath, then, for students of life as well as for archaeologists, though they, too, should find rewarding material in the time-capsules he's bequeathed us. Here is a plausible sample of lower-middle-class Vienna, a city of small shopkeepers stringing out a precarious living and dimly aware of disasters to come. You feel, though obviously with benefit of hindsight, that a decrepit civilisation is stumbling to a stop, and that the sole doubt is what will replace it, a question perceptively answered by Horvath, considering he was writing in 1931, with benefit only of foresight. The Prussian boy stiffly rebukes those who crack jokes about racial purity, that 'sacred subject'. In his cups, he moves his unsteady legs from A to B by barking military orders at himself. A pink and pristine tableau in the nightclub somehow provokes the customers to jump up and join a rousing chorus of 'Deutschland über alles', as if the *Anschluss* had already taken place. The inevitability of war is mooted, and callousness, prejudice, imperviousness to others is always in the air, though it is mostly directed at the second sex. 'Anyone can get a woman, cripples, anyone, even if they're falling apart with the pox,' growls a butcher's boy with not a lot more contempt than that commonly shown by his fellow-males, 'and all they need is a good punch in the mouth every now and then.' Some rough beast, its hour come round at last, is already slouching towards Bethlehem to be born.

Maximilian Schell, imported to direct, loses no opportunity to emphasise the bustle of everyday life in the bourgeois ant-hill. The production is lavish, elaborate, and perhaps a bit too entranced with the fading glamour of dear old Vienna on her plush deathbed. But the performances are as consistent as any we've seen since Mr Hall moved his troops down the Waterloo Road: for instance, Stephen Rea, a shifty but not contemptible seducer, Warren Clarke, trundling his impressive stomach to and fro, and Elizabeth Spriggs as a lady tobacconist of uncertain age, irresistibly drawn to male flesh. I shan't quickly forget her ebullient swagger as she sniffs the air, or the squidgy convulsions of her bosom and thighs inside a bathing costume far too tight for her, or the speculative way she sizes up an amorous but obese tourist – 'how much do you *weigh*?'. It all adds up to a persuasive picture of an emotional misfit, a woman just too sensual and sentient for the cramped milieu in which she's been unkindly dumped: fine visual accompaniment for Horvath's jumping words.

Briefly, Robert Holman's *German Skerries* is a nice, sensitive, open-minded piece, with John Normington as an elderly birdwatcher and that formidably promising actor, Paul Copley, as a young and irrepressible one, swapping companionable thoughts in an oasis somewhere amid the grime and slime of Teesside. The subject is traps, the sort that exist to multilate free spirits – an image that brings me, inevitably enough, to Caryl Churchill at the Theatre Upstairs. Her *Traps* takes us into a commune, fiddling with chronology and topology to demonstrate, so it seems, that nothing much changes: the pattern of our behaviour and relationships persists, whether we're unhappily married wives, male paranoiacs or anything else. This is R. D. Laing's *Knots* revisited, a study of ravellings and self-ravellings with an odd and unexpected ending: the cast strip one by one and souse themselves in an old tin bath. The water looked less than translucent afterwards, precisely the impression left by this clever, arcane play.

Music

Andrew Clements

Island Line

Fires of London *Queen Elizabeth Hall*
Steve Reich and Musicians *Roundhouse, further performance 6 February*

In 1970 Peter Maxwell Davies began spending his winters in Orkney, installed in a lonely cottage on the cliffs of Hoy. The islands and their history, particularly as refracted through the writing of George Mackay Brown, have dominated his music ever since. New inspiration was timely: the *blitzkreig* tactics of Davies's music-theatre pieces of the late Sixties were a stylistic dead-end that could never have sustained a flexible personal idiom. In Orkney he could pare down his style, tempering its emotional overkill with a renewed interest in abstract musical thought. Yet this softened approach had its drawbacks as well, and the principal works in the 'Fires of London' concert exemplified the double-edged influence island life has had on Davies.

Ave maris stella is a substantial (over 35-minute) single-movement sextet written two years ago as a memorial to a friend. As with many of Davies's earlier works its starting point is an existing musical fragment, this time the plainsong of the same name also used by Dunstable and Monteverdi. The music is predominantly slow and re-

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strained; what climaxes there are are grouped at the centre of the work before a return to the music of the opening, when the plainsong is finally quoted, and a long elegiac coda. Davies showed his ability to sustain large-scale forms 15 years ago in the works that led up to the opera *Taverner*, but what is new to his music is a refinement of texture and subtlety of expression that makes it more humane and approachable, and ultimately more profound. *Ave maris stella* is Davies's most impressive instrumental work to date, and the marimba pulsations which close it, seeming to measure time until extinction, are one of his most memorable ideas. His earliest settings of Mackay Brown were the most effective, their austere lyricism finely tuned to Brown's astringent mixture of Christian and pagan symbolisms. More recent song cycles have been less sharply focussed, as if Davies's deepening understanding of Brown's work has proved too complicated to be expressed clearly in music. The newest of them is *The Blind Fiddler* (1976), settings of seven texts printed as an appendix to Brown's play *A Spell for Green Corn*, about a fiddle player periodically reincarnated to 'cleanse the islands with music'. The songs are interspersed with short, folksy dances, but these are insufficiently characterised to break up the monotony of the settings.

If Davies's music shows signs of stagnation, Steve Reich appears to be breaking free from the conceptual straightjacket which has imprisoned his music for the best part of a decade. His work has more in common with some visual artists than with much of the musical *avant-garde*; there are strong parallels between the procedures of Minimalists such as Sol LeWitt and Reich's concept of music in which the listener's appreciation hinges on an ability to perceive and follow the 'process' producing it. From the mid-Sixties until *Drumming* (1971), the main work in next Sunday's concert, Reich was almost exclusively concerned with rhythmic processes. These 'phase' pieces create musical interest by the superposition of phrases that become progressively out of step, resulting in slowly evolving cross rhythms, underlined by the instrumentation.

In *Music for 18 Musicians*, given its UK premiere at the Roundhouse, Reich has switched his attention to harmony. The work is built on a series of 11 diatonic chords heard at the outset, each of the 12 subsequent sections being based on one of these chords. The rhythmic processes are now small-scale, reduced to decorations above slow harmonic developments. To emphasise the new harmony richness, Reich's ensemble includes for the first time strings and clarinets besides the usual complement of pianos, tuned percussion and women's voices. The work retains the surface features of earlier Reich: an insistent rhythmic pulse, multilayers of syncopations and above all a machine-like finish, in a performance precisely drilled in every detail. But for all that the ear is held enthralled and delighted for 55 minutes by the richness and variety of the score, there is something unsatisfactory about a work which admits of no other perspective beyond that determined by its construction.

Opera

John Morgan

The Producers

Der Freischutz *Covent Garden, further performances 4, 9, 12 and 15 February*
Il Trovatore *Coliseum, further performances 4 and 8 February*

When, as in the case of these two works, the principal task facing a producer is to create in the audience a willing suspension of hilarity, one questions the wisdom of putting them on the stage. The problems of *Trovatore* are familiar. The libretto's nonsense is so unwinning that, to borrow from Oscar Wilde, a man would need a heart of stone to observe the death of the hero without bursting into laughter. At the Coliseum the general air of farce which pervades the tragedy is improved upon by awarding Azucena, the gypsy mother, a wig which makes her look like a dog at a time when she should be inviting a more elevated form of sympathy. This was a pity, since it distracted attention from a most powerful performance by the tenor Kenneth Collins; in him and the baritone of Neil Howlett the ENO have a highly promising pair of young Verdi singers.

With *Der Freischutz* the difficulties are more novel – it is 15 years since it was last presented at the Royal Opera. I had spent many a cheerful hour speculating on how the producer Gotz Friedrich might make a quasi-Marxist work of this myth-haunted, enchanted tale, a foundation stone in the temple of German romanticism and, it might be thought in our sceptical times, a load of old hay. He did not disappoint me. Certain innovations I believe were not intentional, as when a plank on which the soprano was kneeling collapsed, and when a canopy fell on the heads of the foppish gentry at the crucial shooting match in which the hero guns down the evil Caspar (a brilliant performance by Kurt Moll).

The intention was clear from the first moment of a production that, within its own terms, was yet another triumph for Mr Friedrich and the conductor Colin Davis. We are told at once that the action takes place in the aftermath of the Thirty Years War. I had always understood that Weber and his inept librettist suggested this because they were a little nervous of an early-19th-century audience swallowing a tale so dependent on the powers of magic. One can imagine the conversation only too well. If the libretto sounds too ridiculous, then set the scene back a few hundred years. And why not in Bohemia – people will believe anything of Bohemia? If they had thought a little harder, Transylvania might have been even better, given the skulls, the bat's blood and the rest of the paraphernalia of the *mittel-Europa* voodoo.

Mr Friedrich, however, seizes on this understandable anxiety on the part of the work's creators to present us with a devastated land, the forests burned, the peasants impoverished as, of course, they were. The scene does not sit well with the music; but his view is all of a piece throughout and in the last scene the hermit (Robert Lloyd in fine voice), singing of love and peace, has the masses supplicant and transformed. Here again, though, the music cannot bear the strain. There is too easy an analogy with Mozart's Sorastro: once the comparison crosses the mind, the effect is lost. It might have been better to have concentrated more on the magic, particularly since gullibility is presently in fashion.

Nevertheless it is a fascinating production, spurred on by Mr Davis and his band playing as well as ever I've heard them: we take that orchestra too much for granted. In a live transmission on Radio 3 on Monday the singers all sounded in better voice, the others matching the excellence of Moll, Lloyd and, above all, Lucia Popp. Not that I'm suggesting for a moment that there is any argument at all for just listening, not watching: it is just that producers always seem to have a different point of view.

John Coleman will be back next week

Television

Ian Hamilton

Myxing It

When I was about eight a kindly old lady down the road gave me a rabbit for my birthday. Not one of your sleekly munching chinchillas, nor even a spry Belgian hare; indeed, nothing at all like the cuddly bunnies other boys at school had in their cages. Mine was a mess. I should have remembered that during my short career as a six-year-old archaeologist, it had been that same old dear's entire back lane that I had excavated. For two years, the hag had been waiting for her chance. And here it was, my rabbit. Freakishly skeletal, foul-tempered and contemptuously open-bowelled, you couldn't stroke the thing without having your tiny hand gnawed to the bone. If you let it out of its cage, it would go straight for your balls. Failing them – and fail them, just about, it did – it would race frenziedly in circles round the yard until at dusk you were forced to go out after it with a sack; then it would really get you, scratching, biting, leaking . . . I loathed it, and I've loathed all rabbits ever since, so it was pleasurable to glean from Julian Pettifer's *Horizon* (BBC-2) fresh evidence of the species' rotten ways. Their main interest we know all about and can't in conscience utterly deplore; it's their smaller, less well-documented traits that catch the fancy – the buck's touching way of marking out his doe by urinating on her, for instance. All right, you can say we do that too in our own way, but what about the rabbity habit of, in *Horizon*'s words, 'recycling food by excreting special soft pellets which are then re-ingested'? Surely only some of us do *that*.

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Happily, *Horizon* spent most of its time discussing ways of reducing the rabbit population, so we were able to tolerate a certain amount of rather more indulgent material recounting the rodents' once-favoured place in history, their magnificent feat of chewing their way half way across Australia without a drink, and so on. There was, of course, a final bid for our compassion: 'Looking at the blind and bloated face of a diseased rabbit, we must feel some doubts about spreading the disease of myxomatosis, but, if the rat were the victim, would we feel the same?' Certainly not; since my rabbit, I've always got on rather well with rats.

Hasn't It Got to Stop? was the title of *Man Alive*'s excellent report on the Ulster Peace Movement (BBC-2). This was not just another hymn to the courage of the movement – although the risks its members are running were plentifully demonstrated. The assumption was that the movement is now strong enough and well-publicised enough to survive; that it is not too early to start wondering if it can offer anything more than well-organised indignation. Looked at in the short term, the Peace People's affirmations seemed hopelessly vulnerable when set against the rooted bigotries of the IRA and UDA spokesmen who were interviewed; and there were moments (in a way more troubling) when their programme of peace and love looked not so much too innocent as too late.

It was shown that you don't have to be a gun-toting combatant in Northern Ireland to feel genuine hatred of the British; as one quivering old lady put it:

> A lot of people here have no time for the IRA but they've got less time for the British Army. They've seen their sons repeatedly arrested and beaten up, their homes ripped apart.

In the minds of many in Ulster, the Peace Movement's rhetoric is uncomfortably close to that of the British (certainly the British Press) and there is suspicion of its leaders' heavily publicised fund-raising trips abroad. Questioned on her attitude to the British Army, Betty Williams was correctly cagy but courageously correct in pointing out that 'You can't compare the violence done by the British to that of the para-military groups.' There are, though, a lot of people in Northern Ireland who (also) desperately don't want to see their children die, but who are too far gone in hatred to bring themselves to swallow *any* historical defence of Britain's role there. One of this *Man Alive*'s many merits was in acknowledging this fact and yet not stopping short there. 'Solutions? That will take a long time. An easing of tensions, perhaps.' Watching the movement's representatives at work in schools, in small community groups and on street corners, one was relieved to be able to envisage the success of this modest, but momentous, object. But it was hard also not to wonder if the gunmen will tolerate the movement taking more than just a few steps down from 'harmless' rhetoric.

I watched the first and last few minutes of *Panorama*'s kick-off to the Jubilee celebrations (BBC-1). For openers, we had newsreel clips of her Majesty in Berlin, Paris, Philadelphia and so on; these had enough splendid things in common for me to feel justified in turning to BBC-2 to make sure that the *Mike Reid Show* was comfortably disaster-bound. I'd have been sorry, though, to miss *Panorama's* sign-off to its symposium on why we need a Queen. There was Hailsham; uncontrollably rumbustious, he would have us think, but in fact ruthlessly determined to be the last to leave the room. 'I can't think why you think complacency's a danger. If you've got something to be complacent about, why not be complacent. Hooray, hooray, hooray.' Bells ring, tides lap, music, titles, credit. Why does he still bother?

Art

John Spurling

Waste Land

Unofficial Art from the Soviet Union *ICA*

'How long,' asked Andrei Sinyavsky in a recent essay, 'can a large and independent state do without art and literature?' Following its exhibition of Malevich's graphics, which gave some idea of the powerful innovatory movement in Russian art that was ground underfoot by Stalinism, the ICA is now showing a sample of what, in the period since Stalin's death, has grown up like weeds on a piece of waste ground, unwanted, unrecognised, sometimes actually cut down with bulldozers, more often simply starved with neglect.

Here are artists who have, on the one hand, been denied official status and therefore, in a totalitarian state, the means of earning a living by their art (even when they have not been sent to labour-camps, psychiatric wards or exile in the West); and on the other hand deprived (except on a few occasions) of the opportunity both of seeing the work of their fellow-artists from other countries and of showing their own work to their fellow-citizens.

The overpowering atmosphere of neglect, of work done in a cultural vacuum, is if anything emphasised by the present exhibition, in which paintings, collages and graphics by artists of widely different temperament and ambition jostle one another on the walls, as if the mere fact of being there at all for somebody to see were for the moment enough. It is surely this general atmosphere which has led so many critics to make grotesquely unjust comparisons with paintings on park railings. A much fairer comparison would be with the *British Painting '74* exhibition at the Hayward, where many fine paintings by some of the best British artists were temporarily robbed of their value by crowded hanging and indiscriminate selection.

To take a few examples: Zverev's rapidly sketched portrait of an artist (his means, though not his ends, learnt from watching an American Tachiste at work during the 1957 Sixth World Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow); Weisberg's mysterious still-lives, almost lost in crepuscular whiteness; Yakovlev's bold flower-paintings; Zharikh's icon-like portrait of Alexander Glezer (the collector who brought all these works out of Russia and set up the Russian Museum in Exile near Paris): Infante's small, deft, kinetic abstracts in tempera; and Nemukhin's half-humorous, half-melancholy paintings of playing-cards; all these would stand up on their own terms to anything done in the West if they were transferred to a domestic setting or to a more sympathetic public one. It is particularly hard on these artists that they should be judged as a coherent public protest movement against the abysmal public art demanded by their government, when their opposition precisely consists in following their own noses privately and separately.

Nonetheless, there is a kind of coherence underlying a great many of the works in this show, a coherence rather of content than of form. Here again, as the art historian Igor Golomshtok points out in the book published to coincide with the show, many Western critics have been less than fair. It is a disorientating and uncomfortable experience to be suddenly confronted with this array of strangers clamouring for attention, and one's immediate reaction is to tick off the obvious, superficial borrowings from the neatly stacked card-index of Western styles: here surrealism, there Pop, abstract expressionism on my left, hard-edge on my right. What did we expect? A shadow battalion of Russian Bacons, Hockneys, Pollocks, de Koonings, Rileys and Rauschenbergs to step fully-armed from the aching head of Brezhnev? Or a brand-new movement to rescue us from the cold hands of conceptualism, performance art and super-realism? What we are given is something much harder to assimilate, more foreign, more peculiarly Russian than appears at first glance.

The history of Russian art is, briefly, this: folk-art applied to objects of daily use and icon-painting up to the 18th century; then a period of collusion with prevailing international styles until the appearance at the end of the 19th century of a realist school called 'The Wanderers' (official ancestors of Social Realism); followed by the sudden, brilliant flare-up of Malevich, Kandinsky, Gabo, Chagall et al., followed by nothing. The painters put before us at the ICA are most of them trying to find their way back, by utterly different routes, into a Russian tradition which was, according to Gabo, at once spiritually idealistic, formally abstract and socially utilitarian (in the sense that icons were ritual objects intended for public display).

At its weaker end this attempt dissolves into folkish fantasy or a rather simplistic use of religious symbols, but when it works – as it does chiefly here in certain drawings and graphics – it creates images which combine Gabo's three elements to extraordinary effect. Look at Plavinsky's etching of a spider's web hanging over a jagged pillar of rock, to which cling grasses, ferns and weeds, a kind of Japanese wilderness peopled with erect butterflies, their wings folded round them like bishops' copes; or at

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Sveshnikov's drawings done in a labour camp, in one of which a prison guard with angels' wings turns gracefully in the air over a settlement crowded with convicts; or at Makhov's drawing *Execution I*, the nakedness of the victim and executioners contrasting with stiff coats and hard-edged hats of the watching commissars, the heads of the packed crowd behind the stake now swollen, now diminished as if seen in delirium; or at Shemyakin's aquatints of 'metaphysical heads', haloed icons transmuted into floating abstract designs in the rich, clear colours of fresco.

However confusing its impression on us, this exhibition returns, it seems to me, an unequivocal answer to Sinyavsky's rhetorical question.

Weekend Competition

No 2449 **Set by Dandy**

'The King could not be accused of toying *with his food . . .*' said a *Times* obituarist of a royal glutton. Competitors are asked to pen a 150-word obituary, of any 20th-century figure, which shows the strain of finding euphemisms for warts. By 18 February – sorry about the dates recently: another time-warp.

No 2446 **Set by E. O. Parrott**

We wanted extracts from NS profiles of Hannibal, Henry VIII, God, etc.

Report **by Fat Jeff**

A terrible month for me – one I would as soon forget. First there was the drubbing over 2440, then that frightful mix-up with Snubbin a fortnight ago. This week – thank God – Spiro Keats and The Lemon Kid are both in their rooms, brooding about not being profiled in 2446, which gives me the chance to praise a nimble entry. You showed diligence and wit; you quickly sensed that you were intended either to parody the NS profile or to travesty subtly the achievements of yesteryear; you get £6 each.

Such a protracted career must include failures, yet He is vehement and persuasive in defending each apparent error, defeat or *volte-face* as the triumph of foresight and mastery. Even the death – in appalling circumstances – of His only son is ascribed to a universal plan; and he obscurely insists that the loss was only technical. With the famous candour (in selective bursts) goes the famous vanity. No intellectual, he describes Himself as 'naturally creative' (whether jocularly or in earnest it is – as so often – hard to determine) and admits to devouring those works of art which contain portrayals of Him. In general He will agree that He has been fairly – even favourably – depicted, though He has been heard to deplore the 'unfortunate vein of caricature' in Blake, and woe betide the subordinate who drops the name of Milton on an off-day. Probably His chief defect is the schizophrenia of power that impels Him to take credit for successes while greeting disaster (the list is formidable) with the expression 'free will' on His lips.

BASIL RANSOME

As lightly dismissive of the claim that he chose the long way round via the Alps simply to secure an extended winter holiday as he is of the innuendo that his penchant for elephants bordered on the unnatural ('there's nothing that I don't get up to – according to these journalist johnnies') Hannibal retains a healthy disrespect for the Roman top brass that faced him when he finally descended into the plains. 'Thought they'd got me boxed in – but I proved a wee bit too Cannae for 'em – eh what?' is a typical jest, ejaculated with that terrible thousand-decibel laugh that, triggering avalanches galore, used regularly to bury the opposition on his Alpine passage. Denying that he'd ever felt fear ('no one less cost-effective than your yellowbelly, old boy') he nonetheless blenched when I mentioned the 'Appreciation' of his military exploits shortly to be published by that all-purpose sage, Alunus Chalfons . . .

COLIN KIMBERLEY

'A punishment from God'? Attila's verdict on Genghis Khan – or 'Temujin' as he is still called by those of his childhood friends who avoided having their tongues bisected in a campfire rough-and-tumble – conflicts with Genghis's images as a pragmatic futurologist with the foresight and dynamism to practise swingeing population control long before it became fashionable. As a town planner, he lacks flexibility but not the courage to make sweeping changes. Whole races in Central and Western Asia have, in his lifetime, been liberated from their petty tyrants, their yokes, and their heads. Anticipating Proudhon, he has applied the Mongol penal code scrupulously and chopped up anyone who owned anything.

MORAY MCGOWAN

Although his father died aged 777 and actually begat him when 182 Noah was a vigorous youngster and continuing energetic in his prime bids fair to outdo him. Beginning as a shepherd and herdsman, Noah, like his more thoughtful predecessors, has always kept in touch with God and paid great attention to the Rules. Advised by the Divine Source to study shipbuilding, he became very proficient and subsequently constructed the biggest ship afloat. He initiated the 'rising water launching' method and further developed the now familiar 'drift' aspect of navigation. At sea he has achieved fame as a commander instigating novel 'search and find' experiments when seeking landfall. Accredited with rescuing much fauna in the recent floods he modestly attributes this success to the Almighty. Latterly he has taken up viniculture and many will testify he is an excellent and convivial vintner.

L. G. UDALL

'Sir . . .'

The dinner-party falls silent. Necks crane forward. Sssh. The Sage of Gough Square is about to give utterance.

How this unprepossessing Midlander stormed the commanding heights of the metropolitan cultural establishment is something of a mystery, like the man himself. A self-proclaimed enemy of cant, Dr (the degree is honorary) Johnson manages to reconcile genuine compassion for the underdog with an incurably romantic Toryism; devout religious beliefs with a notorious intimacy with a Streatham housewife 30 years his junior. And his constant companion is a promiscuous young Scottish laird. His friends would say Johnson is the very soul of English common-sense; others might argue he gives middle-brow cracker-barrel philosophising an up-market twist by using long words. Hack pamphleteer, failed novelist, struggling lexicographer, esteemed pundit, literary father figure: it would add up to an entertaining biography – if anyone could be found to write it.

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

Tony Miles

Chess

No 19 **Final Scores at Hastings**

The Hastings premier tournament finished, as expected, in a convincing victory for the Russian Oleg Romanishin. This success, combined with his other recent results, has caused several writers to compare him to World Champion Karpov. These comparisons are by no means exaggerated, and if he continues to improve Romanishin will indeed be a force to be reckoned with in three years time.

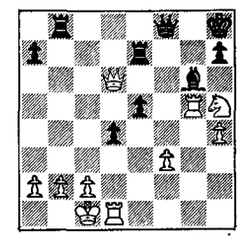
The revelation of the tournament was the play of the Israeli Master Shimon Kagan who finished second with 9½/14 scoring his first GM norm with a round to spare. In 3rd place was the American GM James Tarjan whose nine points included, uncharacteristically, eight draws. Sharing 4th were Andras Adorjan and ex-World Champion Vassily Smyslov. Adorjan, the only undefeated player, contracted flu two days after beating me and made little or no attempt to win thereafter scoring only one more victory and 12 draws.

I finished 6th with 7½ after throwing away more points than I care to recall. In the latter half of the tournament I turned a won position into a lost one in a time scramble against Kagan, and a few days later put a piece en prise in a winning position against Rumens in his time trouble.

I concluded by playing my last two games on the same day in order to get away to the equally traditional, but distinctly less pagan festival at Wyk-aan-Zee, Holland where the Best Game prize went to the following complex struggle.

White: J. Kaplan. Black: Dr M. Vukcevic.
1. P-Q4, N-KB3; 2. P-QB4, P-KN3; 3. N-QB3, B-N2; 4. P-K4, P-Q3; 5. P-B4. The 4-pawns attack, though rather out of fashion at the moment, remains white's sharpest line against the King's Indian. **5. . . . 0-0; 6. N-B3, P-B4; 7. P-Q5, P-QN4!?** An aggressive variation on the usual 7 . . . P-K3. If now 8. P x P, P-QR3 with a reasonable Benko Gambit position. **8. P-K5, P x P; 9. P x P, N-N5; 10. B-B4, N-Q2; 11. P x P.** If 11. Q-K2, P-N5; 12. N-QN1, Q-B2 and the white centre crumbles. **11 . . . QN x P; 12. P-KR3, N x Nch; 13. Q x N, N-R3; 14. P-KN4.** Attempting to restrict black's pieces, but dangerously exposing his own King. A double-edged struggle now ensues. I feel that black should be winning, but white manages to hold on. **14. . . P-K4; 15. B-K3, P-B4; 16. B-QB4, K-R1; 17. P-Q6, P-K5; 18. Q-N3, P x P; 19. P x P, R-B6; 20. Q-N1, N x P; 21. B x P, Q-N4; 22. B-Q4, B x B; 23. Q x Bch, N-B3; 24. B-K2.** Suddenly black is in trouble. The dark squares are weak and the pin on his N is troublesome. If now 24 . . . R-B4; 25. N x P or 24 . . . R-B5; 25. O-O-O! gets the white K to safety. **24 . . . R-K6; 25. R-KB1, B-B4; 26. N-Q5, Q-N6ch; 27. K-Q1, Q x P! 28. Q x Nch, Q x Q; 29. N x Q. R-KB1! 30. K-Q2** (If 30. N-N4, R-Q1ch!), **R-KN6; 31. R x B, P x R; 32. N-R5, R-Q1ch; 33. K-K1, R-N8ch; 34. B-B1, P-B5.** The advantage has again changed hands and white struggles to contain the passed Ps. **35. K-B2, R-N5; 36. N-B6, P-K6ch; 37. K-B3, R-N8; 38. R-B1, R-R8; 39. N-N4, P-KR4; 40. N-K5, R-Q7; 41. N-N6ch, K-N2; 42. N x P, R-B7ch; 43. K x P, R(8) x B. Draw agreed.** (If 44. R x R, R x R; 45. N x Pch, K-B2; 46. N-B4, R-QN8; 47. N-Q3=).

Problem 19:
Black to play. How should the game go? Entries to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked not later than Wednesday, 16 February.



Solution to Problem 17:
1. . . . N x B; 2. K x N, R x P! 3. K x R, Q x Pch; 4. K-R3, R-R1ch; 5. K-N2, R-R7ch; 6. K-N1 Q-N6ch; 7. K-B1, R-R8 mate.

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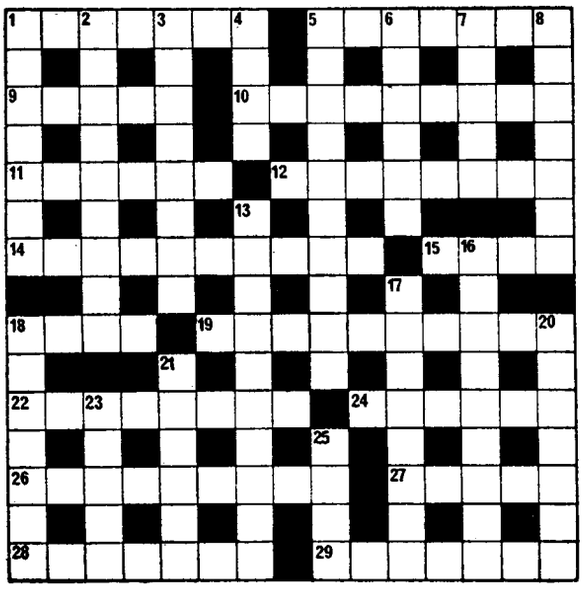
Weekend Crossword 1201

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1201, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 15 Feb.



ACROSS

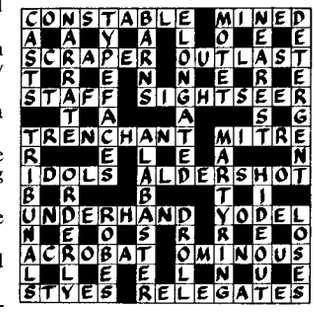
1. Biographer who makes the smell increase (7).
5. Animal's home to note in the country (7).
9. Priest who makes an animal lose its tail (5).
10. It is put inside, but may make one's son tinier (9).
11. Freshly depict two descriptions of meat (6).
12. Friend holds gold to draw in foreign country (8).
14. Wood sees the directors after the game (10).
15. Overcome with wonder, motherless Adam took a wife (4).
18. Literary man who is the reverse of dull (4).
19. Where there is a desire to eat a dog's head? (10).
22. Resourceful Ann? (8).
24. Pursued the tenacious (6).
26. Save Spain being ruined by a Roman emperor (9).
27. People who appear in nice nighties (5).
28. See cinders are scattered (7).
29. The winged creature has a leg like us (7).

DOWN

1. Priceless? Not he at the end of the story (7).
2. Journalist as wooer without the place for it (9).
3. Inscriptions show mine in untidy heaps (8).
4. Liberal manner in the home (4).
5. Oppose making a record the present (10).
6. Sea creature that comes in a Northumbrian ceremony (6).
7. Copying the sound of a bullet (5).
8. The warm-hearted came first and got a fire going (7).
13. For softening regulate main to loud (10).
16. Wrens with song changed in error (9).
17. Putting up with an international footballer (8).
18. Was necessary in plot about seaside resort (7).
20. Old men are still here when the old man passes away (7).
21. Succeed in making a person grow old (6).
23. Street radio turned up for sporting events (5).
25. Certainty produced by the opposite of haphazard means of forecasting (4).

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1199



Prizewinners to No 1199

Mrs Phillips (Gt Malvern)
J. M. Newth (Llanharan)
Esther Kunda (Israel)

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Meetings

Continued from page 172

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON, Gower St, WC1E 6BT. Department of German. Public Lectures, 2 p.m. Adm. Free 11 Feb. 'Herder's Historicism' by Sir Isaiah Berlin.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON: A Lecture entitled: 'The Economic Uses of Utilitarianism' will be given by Professor J. A. Mirrlees (University of Oxford) on 10 February, 1977 at 5.30 p.m., at University College, (Chemistry Auditorium), Gower St, WC1. Adm. free, without ticket. Academic Registrar.

BARBARA CASTLE, David Stark Murray 'The Doctors' Attack on the NHS'. House of Commons Meeting, 7 p.m. Wednesday 9 February: Chairman: Arthur Blenkinsop in whose name room booked. Free & Open to All. Socialist Medical Association.

'THE POLITICS OF ECONOMIC Interdependence' Rt Hon. Edmund Dell will give the Fifth Rita Hinden Memorial Lecture: Saturday, 12 Feb. 2.45 p.m. Holborn Library Hall, Theobalds Rd, WC1 (Und. Holborn or Chancery Lane, Buses 19, 38, 172) Tickets 50p at door or Tel: 01-883 3537.

CHRISTIAN SOCIALIST MOVEMENT. Guest speaker: Canon David Edwards on 'Options for Britain'. Chairman: Lord Soper. Tues. 8 Feb., 8 p.m. at House of Commons (Room 8). All welcome.

YOUNG FABIAN GROUP. Tues. 8 Feb. Lord Balogh on 'Current Economic Policy' 8 p.m. 11 Dartmouth St, SW1.

CENTRAL LONDON FABIAN SOCIETY. Steven Hasler of the SDA, on 'The Marxist Menace in the Labour Party', 9 Feb, 7.30 p.m. 5 Tavistock Place, WC1. Collection: all welcome.

SUNDAY 6 FEB. 'And on the Eighth day', Young Mapam invites you to see a film on pollution and discuss practical things we can do about it. 37 Broadhurst Gardens, NW6. Finchley Rd Tube. 8 p.m. 55p membs, 75p non-members.

'SOME CULTS FROM THE EAST – Sense and Nonsense' by Jim Herrick. London Young Humanists, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, W8. Sunday 6 Feb. 7.30 p.m.

GREAT PHILOSOPHERS. Survey of Western Philosophy including Plato, Spinoza, Kant. Programme devised and led by Kishor Parekh. Commencing 7 p.m. Thursday 10 February at the Theosophical Society, 50 Gloucester Place, W1 (01-935 9261).

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE, 54 Holland Pk, W11. Sun. 6 Feb. 'The Ramayana' by Swami Bhavyananda at 5 p.m. All welcome. Vedanta magazine 40p.

BUDDHIST SOCIETY, 58 Eccleston Square, London SW1. Sat. 5 Feb. 3 p.m. 'Open Day'. Tues. 8 Feb. 6.30 p.m. 'Introducing Buddhism'. Wed. 9 Feb. 6.30 p.m. 'Mahayana & Theravada Buddhism'. Two separate Study Classes. All welcome. Send s.a.e. for full programme.

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UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON, Gower St, WC1E 6BT. Lunch Hour Lectures, 1.20 to 2. Admission free. 8 Feb. 'Caxton – five hundred years on' by Mr N. J. Barker; 10 Feb. Films: 'Leviathan' (Brunel's great ship) and 'Dots and Loops' (McLaren abstract).

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON: A lecture entitled: 'Michelangelo's Genesis: Structuralist Comments on the Sistine Chapel Ceiling' will be given by Professor Sir Edmund Leach (Provost of King's College, Cambridge) at University College London, (Botany Theatre), Gower Street, WC1E 6BT at 5.30 p.m., on 9 February 1977. Admission free, without ticket. Academic Registrar.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON: A course of Two Lectures will be given by Dr D. Baatz (Saalburg Museum, Frankfurt) entitled: Lecture 1: 'The Development of The Limes in Germania Superior and Raetia, with Special Reference to the Surviving Remains' Lecture 2: 'Recent Finds of Ancient Artillery'. Both Lectures will be given in Room G6 at the Institute of Archaeology, 31/34 *Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PY on the* 7 & 8 February 1977, at 5.30 p.m. Adm free, without ticket. Academic Registrar.

MEETINGS Cont. on p. 171

PLAY COMPETITION
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Drum Arts Centre Limited is holding a competition for new or previously unperformed plays which reflect this aspect of our society. The winning three plays will be given professional public performances in London and Regions during the JUBILEE YEAR 1977.

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